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Thought Pieces > Are You Desperate for the Word of God?

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by Sis. Pauline, May. 17, 2014



In Amos 8:11,

"The time is coming", says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord".

Reading Ezekiel 47, God was showing Ezekiel how the Word of God will flow from Him to the ends of the earth. Everywhere He is seeking true worshippers; those who are desperate for Him.

In Ezekiel 47:8-12 God is saying that; His Spirit will throughout the entire earth seek out all individuals who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Individuals who are desperate to be cleansed from the polluted religion and beliefs will be cleansed and grow as trees planted by the rivers of water whose roots will grow deep into a deep relationship with the True God.

Even though the entire earth seeks to know the true God – Yahweh, not all will accept Him. Ezekiel 47:11 However, its mud flats and marshes will not become fresh but will remain salty". (Complete Jewish Bible)

Ezekiel 47:11 “But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt”. New King James. ‘Given over to salt’ – Indicating that not everyone will accept the Word of God. Although salt is a natural preserver, symbolically here it has a negative meaning.

There is nothing in this world that satisfies the soul, except Yeshua – Jesus who died on the cross for our sins. John 6:35 states “And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and He who believes in me shall never thirst”. Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled”. People in every religion, culture, and nation are desperate for true peace that can only come from Yeshua – Jesus who died on the cross; healing of body, mind, and soul; true forgiveness of sins, and belonging to the Creator.

When you are desperate for the Word of God, you will never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Psalm 37:19 “They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied”.

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Thought Pieces > **Being in One Accord**

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by Pastor Ramocan, Jul. 24, 2012



Maintaining the Spirit of Pentecost

The early church, in the 1st century AD, experienced at first a tremendous growth in the spreading of the Gospel and in the number of persons called into the Church. The church was characterized by a great vitality and genuine enthusiasm. It operated as one big family.

The believers enjoyed a tremendous unity. They made themselves available to each other and helped each other in every way possible. This harmonious state of affairs among the Christian church in the first century is expressed repeatedly in the book of Acts as being “of one accord” or being “of one mind”. It means that the brethren were of the same will, the same desire, etc. Describing the spirit of the people after Pentecost Acts 2:44-45 says: “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” Continuing in Acts 4:32 Luke says: “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common”.

The believers met and continued daily with one accord for different occasions: in the temple or also breaking bread, i.e. eating meals together in someone’s home. An important matter in reference to “being of one accord” is also: They praised God! Acts 2:46-47 reads : And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people.

The Power of One Accord

Acts 5:12: And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch). When the people of God are in one accord, God works mighty miracles among them. Acts 8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. They gave heed with one accord unto the things which Philip spoke as they heard and saw the miracles which happened! The Lord added to the church such as should be saved. The believers in Christ Jesus were added to the church by the Lord. He added again and again to the church, and that way the church increased and grew.

The church in its early stages of growth gathered daily and they were together daily. They obviously had a desire and the wish to be with each other, they had fixed their eyes on being able to praise God together and to magnify Him. Their view was not directed toward themselves or on any other believer as independent of the others, rather they saw the church in a magnificent position.

What Destroys “One Accord”?

It only takes one person to destroy the “one accord” of an entire congregation. We see this illustrated in the disastrous defeat of Israel at Ai. Israel had just miraculously won a battle in Jericho, because they were in “one accord.” Then one man, Achan, secretly stole certain items from Jericho. The power of

God left Israel until that one man and his family were removed from the congregation. (See Josh 7.) Similarly, one man and his wife secretly agreed to lie to the Apostles in regards to the price of a land sale. In doing this, they failed to realize they were not lying to the Apostles but to the Holy Spirit. God also removed them from the congregation by sudden death. Following this, great fear came upon all the church, “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women)” (Acts 5:12-14).

The Church Fell into Discord

Unfortunately, this situation was not a lasting one, and we learn from later writings of the apostle Paul in his epistles to Timothy, that already at that time, which is only a few decades after the beginning of the Christian church at Pentecost, many things had changed and turned out for the worse. Instead of the unity and like-mindedness seen displayed among the believers, now jealousy, hatred, envy and disagreements were spreading and caused divisions within the church. Believers were judging one another, criticizing others and fighting with each other, and the loving care from before which they had had for one another and the zeal for likemindedness was replaced. The church developed more and more into “biting and devouring one another” which led to that which Paul already had spoken of in Galatians 5:15 – “they were consumed of one another”. In Philippians, Paul writes from prison to a church disturbed by envy and rivalry. Philippians 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: Philippians 4:2-3 I implore Eu-o-dia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

They Were Taking Each Other to Court

1 Cor 6:1-11 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ...7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!

Our Ambition to Serve God Can Turn Into Selfish Ambition

Astonishingly, it is when people are really serious and zealous for their beliefs that they are apt to come in conflict with one another. The greater our enthusiasm for the Church, the greater the danger of colliding with each other. Because of our human nature, it is tempting for our passion and zeal for the Church to turn inward and become selfish ambition. When we are bright and passionate and gifted we are often tempted to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

The Apostle Paul understood that because of his brilliance and gifts this was a trap into which he could fall, and that it was the reason God allowed him to experience a thorn in the flesh. In 2 Cor 12:7-10, the Apostle Paul says, And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

How to be of “One Accord”

Being in “one accord” does not mean that every person in a group will “agree” in every opinion or idea. It does mean that everyone is committed to conducting themselves in such a manner that works toward the good of all. This can be compared to an orchestra which plays under the direction of its conductor where each instruments play different tones and melodies, but they all together harmoniously play the same piece of music.

As we consider this in relation to the church, each member of the church must work together as a big whole under the direction of God cooperating with His Word and his holy spirit, all for the purpose of giving praise and honour to God. This, of course, is the exact opposite of divisions, jealous envying, fighting and the like. As the church functions correctly, all contribute to the well being of the whole, and no one is just concerned with themselves, rather every one watches out for the other members.

Yes, at times when we are spiritually strong and zealous for the faith, to prevent us from being overtaken by pride and selfish ambition, God allows problems and tribulations in our lives to produce humility in us so we can maintain unity in his Church and make it into His Kingdom.

Let us maintain the Spirit of Pentecost by imitating the example of Christ. Christ did not consider equality with His Father as something to be held on to. Instead “He emptied himself taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself becoming obedient unto death even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:7–8). Christ voluntarily placed Himself in a position low enough to so he could offer up His life for us. Let us offer up our lives for the unity of God’s Church.

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Thought Pieces > **British Riots Point to Parenting**

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by **Pastor Adrian**, Aug. 13, 2011



The riots in England this week were horrific. As we watched feral children, some as young as 11, smashing and stealing for no reason other than greed, we have to ask what happened to their parents? Specifically, where are their fathers? Moral values need to be embedded in children from an early age.

Prov. 22:6 ¶ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

When psychologists in the 1960s started to teach that disciplining children was unnecessary and governments followed by making it illegal for parents to discipline their children, we should have predicted the lawlessness that plagued England this week.

The crisis in parenting has been amplified by the greed of fashion, video gaming, and music manufacturers and retailers. In an effort to increase profits, they have glorified gang culture and made gang fashion aspirational. Our children are growing up wishing to look and sound like gang members.

We are in perilous times.

2Tim. 3:1 ¶ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2Tim. 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Tim. 3:3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

2Tim. 3:4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Photo by [Todd G](#)

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I am not surprised by what happened in
England, cause it is happening all around the world.

The nations, countries of this world
are without identity and purpose. Rev (13:16) He
causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to
receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that
no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the
beast, or the number of his name. Why? We have rejected the word of Truth, (Yahshua/Jesus) from
the most high God, YHVH of host.

I believe that one of the biggest
factors in the overall pitiful condition of the health of the
nations, is due to the general rejection of YHWH Laws/Commandments,
Statutes, Judgments and Sabbaths by dominant religion, and
Governments.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 – The coming
of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all
power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous
deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the
love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Here, we see
Satan is lawless, not a keeper of Yahweh's Laws. He has
power in lying wonders and unrighteous deceptions.

In my humble view, any Countries,
Islands, nations and governments that reject the Truth of YHWH word
manifested in and through the person (Yahshua/Jesus) will be living a
life without purpose and without hope in the world.

Ephesians

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Where are the Godly parents?

Proverb 6:20 My son, keep your father's

commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

The nations are harvesting what was

sown in the lives of our young people.

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by [Pastor Adrian](#), Feb. 2, 2011



Amy Chua's book, [Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom](#) is generating a lot of heated discussion among parents. So much so, it was recently featured in [Time Magazine](#). Whether you agree with her view or not, I hope you appreciate the fact that Ms. Chua has surfaced an issue that requires our attention.



I think the heated controversy is a result of people feeling insecure about their child-rearing. Let's face it, as a society we are not doing so well. If we are honest and mature enough to face facts, we have to admit that we have failed our young people.

A Dismal Track Record

What are the facts? The leading cause of death is motor accidents (primarily drunk driving). Alcohol consumption among our young people is an indication of the need for them to escape. The second leading cause of death among teenagers is suicide. Think about that. Young people, with their whole lives ahead of them are in such pain that they seek a permanent escape. These powerful stats don't begin to tell half the story. I could go on and quote drug abuse, violence among teens, sexually transmitted diseases, depression and a myriad of other ailments. On top of all of this, teens are not safe in their own homes. A recent [news story](#) is about Julie K. Schenecker who shot her 13 and 16 year old children to death because she thought they were "mouthy". While this extreme form of violence is rare, child abuse is not. Laurence Steinberg, the *Distinguished University Professor of Psychology at Temple University*, said this in his [column](#):

According to the most recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, some 30% of all victims of physical abuse are adolescents. Young adolescents — those between 12 and 15 — are especially likely to be targets, with more than 25,000 official cases of physical abuse in this age group reported annually.

If our childrearing worked, we would have teenagers who are full of hope and a great sense of wonder. And we would be filled with admiration when we think of our teens. Instead, we have teens who have seen it all and done it all and who are bored with life and each other and who often bring out the worst in parents.

God's Word

While the controversy over Ms. Chua's book continues to rage with no clear answer on what is right or wrong, for those of us who are Christians, we needn't be confused. We have a very public example of the consequences of poor child rearing in the pages of the Bible. I am speaking of King David, who was the greatest king of Israel but a very poor father. The lesson of his childrearing is simple, we cannot protect our children from their poor character.

David's approach to child-rearing was not unlike the "modern" approach. It is encapsulated in the 6th verse of 1 Kings 1:

1 Kings 1:6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.

David was a permissive parent. He chose to never contradict his sons. Amy Chua, in defense of her mother in her article, [Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior](#), says,

“What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you’re good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up.”

Discipline develops character. A child is not naturally disciplined. As parents, the discipline that we instill eventually becomes self-discipline.

Character is Destiny

What was the outcome of David’s method of childrearing? Two of David’s sons were put to death because of their poor character. In fact, prior to King Solomon putting Adonijah to death, he made the statement:

1 Kings 1:52 And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

Adonijah’s fate was in his own hands. If he had good character, he would have lived. Unfortunately, Adonijah’s character was set by King David’s permissive parenting.

As parents we have to realize that character is destiny. We need to realize that letting a child have his or her own way all the time is not love. Love focuses on long-term well-being not short-term pleasure. In this respect, Amy Chua is much more in line with God’s word than the permissive social scientists who would have us molly coddle our children in the name of “protecting their self-esteem.”

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by [Pastor Adrian](#), Jun. 13, 2011



[The head of the People's Liberation Army admits to the construction of China's "first" aircraft carrier to symbolize national prestige.](#) History shows us repeatedly that military power always follows economic power. As America's economy continues to decline and its debt to China and other nations continues to soar, we need to brace ourselves for a world, according to prophecy, without American power.

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Thought Pieces > Dealing with Conflict in Marriage

Search for:

by Pastor Ramocan, Nov. 3, 2012



Importance of Marriage to Society

Marriage does not only affect married people. Strong, stable marriages are the foundation of stable families, stable communities and a stable country. Without stable marriages, the breakdown of society is inevitable. Policymakers in the US, and elsewhere, are now coming to recognize the connection between the breakdown of families and the social problems of crime, violence, poverty, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and the spread of sexual diseases.

What is Marriage?

Marriage is a divine institution created and owned by God for procreation and for pleasure. It is God who invites man and woman to enter His holy institution. When you marry, your marriage belongs to God. It's like being invited to enter someone else's home. You do not have the right to decide what you want to do with it; you must comply with the rules of the homeowner. To violate the rules of marriage is to violate its owner (i.e., God).

The Key to a Successful Marriage

The key to a successful marriage is making God the primary partner in your marriage – NOT YOUR SPOUSE. There is a fundamental difference between a secular and a Christian marriage.

A secular marriage is a “fifty-fifty” proposition in which each partner meets only “half” of the marital obligations, and then, demands the partner to measure up to the other half. When one party fails to perform, the other party reciprocates by failing to perform. This often leads to a breakdown in the marriage, which likely ends up in divorce.

A Christian marriage, on the other hand, embraces God as the primary partner in the marriage – not each other. The priority in a Christian marriage is to please God 100%. This approach changes the focus of the marriage from self to God, thereby helping each partner work joyfully and wholeheartedly toward resolving conflicts. Eph 5:21 says to we are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. We find pleasure as a result of pleasing God. We are motivated to give 100% even when the other spouse fails to do his/her part, because more than pleasing our spouse, we are seeking to please God. By applying God's laws of marriage, one hundred percent, without waiting for the other partner to "measure up" in any way, there is a great deal of room for overlap!

How do you make God the primary partner in your marriage? God becomes the primary partner in your marriage when you faithfully follow His instructions irrespective of how your spouse treats you. Your unilateral obedience to God will save your marriage. The primary role of a husband is to model the love of Christ to his family. It is the husband who must take the initiative to first love his wife as much as it was Christ's initiative to first love the Church. In response, wives must honor and submit to their husband's authority as the Church honors and submits to Christ's authority.

God hates divorce, because divorce maligns Christ's love for the Church. Christ has never abandoned his Church even in its state of imperfection. A wife's primary role is to model to her family the submissiveness of the Church to Christ. When the Church encounters problems, the Church seeks God's guidance and direction. In the same way, wives should seek the direction and guidance of their husbands when issues and problems arise in the family. When you move your marriage to this higher plane, your marriage takes on greater meaning and purpose. You are not simply a husband or a wife, you are Christ's representative to your family. Christ becomes your role model; and with Christ in your marriage, you will "smile at the storms".

If Only One Person Obeys God

Serious marriage problems almost always involve sin. Hatred, bitter quarreling, and alienation in a marriage mean that someone is disobeying God. Recognizing that sin is the root of the problem gives hope, because a Christian knows that God has the solution to sin. A problem between two people can only be completely removed if both parties are willing to work at it. However, if only one person obeys God, the other person can keep the problem alive. However, if your partner will not work to improve the marriage, this does not remove your responsibility to do what you can. To please God, you must follow His will regardless of what your partner does. You must believe that you can please God regardless of how others act. 1 John 5:4 – If we are born of God, we overcome the world through faith. If both parties commit to practice God's plan, any couple can eliminate sin from their marriage. And regardless of whether or not your partner obeys God, you can still please God if you will follow the biblical rules of marriage. Please see 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Cor. 9:8, Josh 1:5-9 and Eph 3:20,21.

Do not give up on your marriage. Pray for God's strength. Your marriage is a test of your endurance to enter the kingdom of God. When you encounter the most difficult, painful, cruel experiences in your marriage, remember, it is an opportunity to test and prove God. God can perform miracles in your

marriage. A troubled or broken marriage is an opportunity to prove your faith in God. Philippians 4:6,7 – Don't be anxious, but by prayer and supplication make your requests known to God. 1 John 5:14 – Be confident that, if we ask according to His will, He hears us. [Matt. 6:13; 1 Pet. 5:7]

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Thought Pieces > Importance of Doctrine

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by [Pastor Adrian](#), Mar. 9, 2011



For many Christians, doctrine is completely separate from Christian living. They see Christian living as the heart of their Christianity and doctrinal understanding as something that is optional.

The reality is that doctrine is at the root of behaviour. We behave the way we do because of what we believe.

That behaviour is rooted in doctrine is clearly seen in Rev 2. In verse 6 God says,

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Later in the chapter, God says,

Rev. 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Rev. 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Rev. 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

God ties behaviour to doctrine. Doctrine establishes a perspective and perspective leads to opinions on what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour. Being careless in doctrine inevitably leads to being careless in conduct. This is why we are warned to be careful about our doctrine:

*1Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the **doctrine**; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

If taking heed unto our doctrine and continuing in them leads to salvation for ourselves and those who hear us, surely the opposite is true: being careless in doctrine leads to spiritual ruin.

We must not think doctrine and Christian living are two separate subjects. That is a subtle and clever deception from Satan. We must realize that doctrine and godly living are inextricably linked.

1Tim. 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

1Tim. 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

1Tim. 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Let's hunger and thirst for righteousness by taking heed to our doctrine and honouring those pastors who labour to teach us the faithful word.

1Tim. 5:17 ¶ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

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Thought Pieces > Is It Wrong to Judge Others?

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by Pastor Ramocan, Apr. 11, 2012



Some people believe that it is wrong to judge whether someone else is a Christian. This belief is based on the view that God alone knows the hearts of people and therefore God alone has the right to judge. Does God empower His people to judge others? Does He empower us to judge whether or not they belong to the truth or to error? The scriptural answer is a resounding **YES!**

In Matt 24:4-6 Jesus warns against the deception of false teachers and false prophets. He says “Watch out that no one deceives you for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many”. How can one guard himself against deception without knowing the difference between what is true and what is false? Judging requires the ability to discern between truth and error.

1 Corinthians 2:15 tells us that the spiritual man makes judgements about all things. In Acts 17:11 the Bereans ...examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true and in Rev 2:2 the brethren in the Church of Ephesus tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and found them liars. Here is evidence that the people of God are empowered to judge others to see whether they are in the faith.

Testing the Spirits

In 1 John 4:1-6, The apostle John tells us to *test the Spirits to see whether they are of God*. Why? Because Jesus warned that many false prophets have gone out into the world. “Test” here means “to prove or examine.” Christians must not only test and examine others they must also test and examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22, “*Test all things; hold fast what is good.*”

How does one test the spirits?

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth. The spirit of the enemy is the spirit of deception. We test the spirits by the word of God because in John 17:17 Jesus says *thy word is truth* and 2Tim 3:16-4:5 says “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*”. The scriptures also test our hearts, minds and conscience.

Heb 4:12-13 says *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Mark 12:24-25, Jesus used the scriptures to judge whether the people knew the truth or were in error. He said to them “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?”

Judge by their Fruit

But there is another means by which God empowers us to judge others. He says in Matt 7:16-20,

“By their fruit you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Test the lives of those pretending to be sent by God. Are there inconsistencies in their lives? Are their lives in agreement with God’s Word? Are they receiving glory for what they do, or is God receiving glory? Are they relying on God only for direction or are they basing their teachings on writings from men? Are they or their followers putting their word above the Bible?

Remember the devil is a liar and will mix truth with lies. Any inconsistencies like these will reveal to you if they are from God or not. The Spirit of God always speaks in accordance to God’s Word – the Bible. Anyone putting anything above the Bible or anyone degrading the Bible is not from God.

What about Matthew 7:1?

In Matt 7:1, Jesus says, “*Do not judge or you will be judged.*” To understand this verse, we must also read verses 2 to 5, which show that God is not prohibiting us from judging others. Instead, He is warning us to judge others righteously. Listen to how verses 2-5 bring out this point.

Verse 2 says, “*For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*” This means if you judge others harshly, you will be judged harshly; but if you judge others righteously, you too will be judged righteously. In verse 3, God illustrates how we must first judge ourselves before judging others.

By judging ourselves, we will see that we too are faulty, and therefore, we will be more compassionate and just in judging others. Here is what He says, “*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your*

brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', when all the time there is a plank in your own eye."

We should only judge others after we have judged ourselves. If we have not judged ourselves, we will not be able to judge others fairly since we will not realize that we are corrupt ourselves.

Verse 5 explains, *"You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."* You will only be qualified to righteously judge others *after* you have judged yourself. This is the point Jesus made in John 7:24 to His critics who were judging Him. He did not tell them it was wrong to judge Him. Instead, He urged them to judge Him righteously: *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*

Let's heed God's word and judge ourselves and others with righteous judgment.

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Thought Pieces > [Is re-Baptism Necessary?](#)

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by Pastor Adrian, Jan. 6, 2011



The question of why we require Sunday-keeping Christians to be re-baptized recently came to my attention. It's a fair question. After one has spent many years walking with the Lord, it seems redundant to have to repeat the baptism ceremony. Why ask these Christians to be re-baptized just because they were not keeping God's Sabbath? Is the Sabbath really such a big deal?

Focus on the Law

First, let's not get hung up on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is no more of an issue than any other commandment of God. God says in [Rev 12:9](#), that Satan actively deceives. Consequently, people do not understand the importance of God's Law. They do not believe the breaking of God's commandments matters. Many of these people come to recognize Jesus as Lord but, unfortunately, they still do not understand the importance of God's Law. We know otherwise. God's Law is His way of life. It is the way of love. It is impossible to attain eternal life in a state of rebellion to God's Law.

The first step in our walk with God is repentance. The second is to be baptized. This is made clear in [Acts 2:38](#). These steps are essential before God grants us His Holy Spirit (the deposit on eternal life). God will not grant eternal life to someone who does not conform to His way of life. God's way of life brings peace to us and to others. Breaking God's Law brings misery.

The issue is not whether or not one keeps the Sabbath, the issue is whether or not one keeps God's Law. This is the fundamental issue. Ignorance of the law doesn't matter. Romans 2:11-12 says:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

If someone came to the church of God with multiple partners, God would require them to repent and be baptized. The breaking of God's Sabbath is no different. The Sabbath is one of God's Ten Commandments. James 2:10 says,

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

James could have equally said "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Keep the Sabbath. Now if you commit no adultery, yet you break the Sabbath, you're a transgressor of the law."

Now Focus on the Sabbath

Some have said that we focus too much on the Sabbath. It appears this way only because we live in a [Sabbath-breaking](#) culture. The breaking of other commandments does prick the conscience of most people. It is, therefore, easy for them to recognize the need to repent. They do not realize that the Sabbath is a foundational part of God's system of worship. The first four of the Ten Commandments show us how to love God. (The last six show us how to love our fellow man.) The Sabbath is the fourth command and God commands us to observe it so that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth. In fact, before man was created, God created the sun and moon to enable man to know the appointed times to worship God. You will see this in Gen 1:14, where God says:

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years:

The word “seasons” in this verse is the Hebrew word “moad”. Here is the definition from Strong’s:

*4150. dEowøm mow{ed, mo-ade´; or dEoOm moled, mo-ade´; or (feminine) hødDowøm mowedah(2 Chronicles 8:13), mo-aw-daw´; from 3259; **properly, an appointment**, i.e. **a fixed time** or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; **by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose)**; technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also **a signal (as appointed beforehand)**:—appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn(-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).*

God has [set times](#) for us to worship Him. We welcome everyone to come and fellowship with us at these appointed times. And yes, if you have not been keeping God’s commandments, we will encourage you to repent and be baptized as the first steps in your new walk with God.

If you have questions or comments, please let us know. We’re happy to talk with you.

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I see what you are saying, but it does not address the issue because of a fundamental error I believe that we continue to make as do the “churches of God”.

The fundamental understanding of why Christ came and His role, the works of men Heb 9: 1-10 – similar to Cain’s work versus the Eternal work of God Heb 9:11-28. It does that mean that we become mainstream to believe in the Justifying, sanctifying and saving blood of Jesus Christ.

When we have faith in Jesus Christ, it gives us access to the shed blood of Jesus Christ which justifies us.

Ac 13:38-39 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

A critical question here is this: Assuming that the individuals have believed in Jesus Christ, have truly repented, and were baptized, the same principle which applies to the Sunday/ Sabbath only keeper for breaking the Sabbath and/or not keeping the Holy days, does this not also apply to the Sabbath and Holy day keeper when they break the law too?

Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Isa 64:6 ¶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

If a Sabbath keeper is to be rebaptized when one comes into the knowledge of the Holy Days, then following the same principle, the Holy Day keeper must be rebaptized each time they are lead into knowledge one had not understood before? Is that biblical? And by teaching this are we hindering the work of God?

Ro 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

If one has been walking with God for many years and is bearing the fruit of the Spirit of God yet is not keeping “the law” does the bible teach that they are a heathen?

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The scriptures teach that the Spirit guides (the Sabbaths keeper and the non-Sabbaths keepers) into all truth.

The Bible teaches that the foundation is Christ, the foundation is not the law (otherwise Christ did not need to come). The law is important and is required by God, but the gift of the Grace of God through Jesus Christ (understanding the inner sanctuary, the blood of Jesus Christ and why HE came helps us to understand the gift of the grace of God) is MOST CRITICAL.

Ro 3:21-28 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Christ death would be in vain if we were justified by the deeds of the law.

Ga 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Ro 11:6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

No man or woman is justified by the works of the law yet those who are justified must be doers of the law.

Ro 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Jas 2:24-25 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

Also, if a “Sabbaths keeper” came into the congregation, not believing in Jesus Christ, this person NEEDS to be baptized. A lesson from the Old Testament.

■ *Bro. Adrian*

Thank you for your question/comment. Let me begin by summarizing my understanding of what you are saying:

You believe that anyone who has repented, accepts Jesus Christ, and has been baptized does not have to be re-baptized once they come to the Church of God. You believe this for the following reasons:

1. When we have faith in Jesus, it gives us access to His blood, which justifies us.
2. If people without knowledge of the Sabbath have to be re-baptized, then every believer who sins or comes into greater knowledge of God’s ways would then need to be re-baptized.
3. The scriptures teach that Spirit guides the Sabbath-keeper and the non-Sabbath-keeper into all truth.
4. The Bible teaches that the foundation is Christ; the foundation is not the Law.
5. Christ’s death would be in vain if we were justified by the deeds of the Law.
6. If a Sabbaths keeper came into the congregation that did not believe in Jesus Christ, this person would have to be baptized.

You also asked the question, “If one has been walking with God for many years and is bearing the fruit of the Spirit of God, yet is not keeping the Law, does the Bible teach that they are a heathen?”

Points 5 and 6 I agree with. In no way are we justified by the deeds of the law. This does not,

however, give us permission to break the law. Point 6 is obvious.

Let me begin with your third point: The scriptures teach that the Spirit guides the Sabbath-keeper and the non-Sabbath-keeper into all truth.

The Bible teaches no such thing! It is important that we read the scriptures with precision. Jesus was speaking to His disciples when He spoke of the Spirit's guidance. We see this in John 16:13.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Notice, Christ was speaking to His disciples, and by extension, His people. In addition to guiding His people into all truth, the Holy Spirit will also show us things to come. God does not have this intimate relationship with lawless people. He has it with those who have repented of their lawlessness and who are striving to live His way of giving and loving – codified in His Law.

In your second point, you state: If people without knowledge of the Sabbath have to be re-baptized, then every believer who sins or comes into greater knowledge of God's ways would then need to be re-baptized. There is a clear error in this reasoning. Walking with God is a process. It begins with the initial conviction that one is a sinner and one must repent and be baptized. Upon baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, only then does one truly begin their journey towards the destiny God has prepared for us. This journey is life-long and along the way, we make many mistakes. God does not dismiss us when we sin, nor does he require us to start all over again at baptism. When we sin (not willingly) after baptism, there is a different provision for dealing with the sin of a believer than there is for dealing with initial repentance and entering into a covenant relationship with God. That provision is found in 1 John 2.

1John 2:1 ¶ My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

With initial repentance, one is required to symbolically bury the old man and make a covenant with God. As we struggle with the old man to subject him to the Law of God, we sometimes fail. When we fail, Jesus Christ advocates on our behalf.

You said in your comment, "assuming that the individuals have believed in Jesus Christ, have truly repented, and were baptized...". This is a big assumption. What is repentance?

Repentance is the turning away from sin. What is sin? Sin is the transgression of God's Law. In order to repent, one must first know what sin is. By definition, one must know God's Law. The divinely appointed times for worship are an integral part of God's Law. They represent the God-appointed methodology for worshiping Him. How valid can a baptism be if the individual being baptized does not understand what sin is and the individual baptizing them is unable to articulate to them of what sins they should be repenting?

You said, in your fourth point, that the foundation is Christ not the Law. It is a common but mistaken notion to separate Christ and the Law. Christ and His Law are one. The Law is how He lives. He gives us the Holy Spirit to enable us to keep His Law.

Remember, Christ was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). Why? He was slain because the breaking of His Law, without exception, exacts a penalty. God never dismisses the penalty. Consequently, Jesus Christ came as a man to incur the death penalty on our behalf.

This means that the Law is embedded in the foundation. It is foundational. People run into trouble because Christ's sacrifice eliminated the need for many of the rituals laid down under Mosaic Law. It did not, however, eliminate God's Ten Commandments which pre-date Moses. People often fail to differentiate between ritualistic law and the Ten Commandments. This brings us to your question, "If one has been walking with God for many years and is bearing the fruit of the Spirit of God, yet is not keeping the Law, does the Bible teach that they are a heathen?"

One cannot walk with God and break His Law. This is a contradiction. Walking with God means walking like God which means keeping His Law. This is why Romans says:
Rom. 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

When one surrenders to God, one does not seek to come up with their own definition of righteousness or their own definition of sin. One accepts that God is sovereign and He alone defines sin and righteousness. He tells us that, by nature, we do not want to accept His Law. The very scripture you quoted (Gal 5:22-23) explains that with the Holy Spirit, one lives in such a way that they come under God's authority and within the bounds of His Law. There is no law against such behaviour.

Your main point, which I listed first (When we have faith in Jesus, it gives us access to His blood, which justifies us.), makes no allowance for the works which must accompany our faith. Belief is not enough as clearly pointed out in James 2.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

In addition to faith, we must also have works. Jesus Christ Himself upbraided those who called Him "Lord Lord" but didn't do the things that He required them to do (Luke 6:46). They recognized Him as Lord, they just had their own ideas about what was required and what wasn't. This is unacceptable to God.

Faith in Christ is not just faith in the person of Christ. It is faith in what He preached and He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. One cannot truly understand this gospel, without first understanding God's Holy Days. These divine appointments are sacred and we must learn to separate the sacred from the profane if we are to come to worship God in spirit and in truth. These special days depict God's plan and unveil the good news (i.e., the gospel) of the kingdom of God.

Anyone who has truly repented, is convicted of the truth and has come to believe in the teachings, not just the person, of Christ, will not hesitate to be re-baptized.

I thank you for your question/comment and I'm happy to continue the dialog as we humbly seek to conform to God's will.

■ *Guest*

Interesting conversation. I am a CGI member, but I do not think that it is biblical to require sunday-keepers to be re-baptized. The whole notion does put law over conviction. Baptism is an outward sign of our conviction to Christ. Consider the thief on the cross. He was not baptized, but was promised eternal life. To say that only those who are in the Church of

God movement can obtain eternal life is putting God in a box. It puts the letter of the law over the spirit of the law. The Gentiles (in Romans) had a law unto themselves and kept by nature what God required. This did not include the sabbath. Yes, the law is important, but it is not everything. It points us in the right direction, but it is not the road that leads us there.

■

Luana

I have to agree with your post on Sunday-keepers not needing to be baptized. However, I think it is a truly individual decision. I grew up in the Church of God movement and for me it was my “religion” even though I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour. When the organization was split over doctrinal error, I left and joined the “Sunday-keepers” for many years. However, I always knew Sunday was never the Sabbath. I then became rebaptized as I learned that the Lord, Jesus, not an organization was the head of my life. I recommitted myself to Him and got rebaptized into the body of Messiah all the while attending a Sunday church (but I would never have called myself a Sunday-Keeper). This time I took my personal Messiah by the hand and allowed Him to show me His ways.

During my journey to know Him more deeply, I have slowly moved towards His Torah in this personal relationship with Him. It has been a journey that only He can guide me through. No, I would not get rebaptized a third time. Each time we sin and break God’s law as He shows us, we come to our Lord who is faithful and just to forgive us of all unrighteousness. We all break God’s law all the time in our hearts and minds and in what we say and do. That is why we need the blood of Jesus to cover us and redeem us for the law could never save us but would continually condemn us. Remember the tares and the wheat grow up together. They both look the same. Only Jesus knows who belongs to Him and who doesn’t. He is the one who owns the field.

■

CGI Toronto

To answer this question one must first understand the scriptural requirements for baptism. Doing this will help you to discover whether your baptism was valid and whether you need rebaptism.

The scriptures teach that before one can be baptized one must repent of sin. In Acts 2:38 the Apostle Peter says, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

What is repentance and how does one repent of sin?

Repentance means “to turn” from sin. It implies a conscious decision to forsake sin – that is to stop sinning and walk in holiness.

To stop sinning, one must know what sin is. Why? Because one will not know what to stop doing to stop sinning. One must know what sin is to repent and “turn” from sin. So what is sin? 1 John 3:4 tells us: “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is the transgression of the Law” Did you get that? The Bible defines what sin is. But most persons abandon the Bible’s definition of sin because the majority of churches in which people are baptized teach that the law has been abolished. The Bible says sin is the transgression of the law yet people are baptized in ignorance to what sin is. That is why many who were baptized outside the Church of God continue to live in sin without knowing it by breaking God’s Sabbath and Holy Days. They are living in sin because they do not know what sin is. One who is baptized has died to sin. Paul confronted this issue in the predominantly gentile church in Rome when he asked “How can we who died to sin go on living in it? (Romans 6:2). The Bible is clear that without the knowledge of sin we will go on living in sin.

How does one come to know sin?

Rom. 3:2 answers us. It say “Through the law comes the knowledge of sin” That’s right. One does not know what sin is until one comes to know God’s Law. That is why the Bible says the law leads us to Christ. Because the law exposes our sinful state to us so we can see our need for Christ. The Law does not save us. The law points out sin and condemns us. It is Christ who redeems us from the condemnation of the law. But here is the sixty-four million question posed by Paul in Rom 6:1-4 Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

The role of the law is to point out our sins to us. What is this law? Rom 7:7 explains... I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” There it is. The law referred to here is the Ten Commandments which include the Sabbath. If after you were baptized you lived a life of Sabbath-breaking you were breaking God’s law and you continued to live in sin. You were baptized without knowing what to repent of. You thought you turned from sin but you did not. Satan has deceived the world and cause good people to feel safe when they are in danger by breaking God’s law. Alas, many in God’s Church have been wooed into this deception.

Many who were baptized did not know they were still living in sin until they came into the Church of God and learned how vital the keeping of God’s law is to their salvation.

Does God give His Holy Spirit to one who is breaking His Law?

One who lives in a state of law breaking is constantly living in sin and does not

have the Spirit of God. Why? Because Acts 5:32 says: God gives his Spirit to those who obey him” You may ask, “obey what?” What is it we are called upon to obey so that we may receive God’s Spirit? Jesus answers this question in Matthew 19:17 If you want to enter life, obey the commandments” He then explained what these commandments are by referring in verse 18 to the Ten Commandments And the ruler asked,, “Which ones?” Jesus replied, ” ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Because we live in a Sabbath breaking, culture where almost everybody goes to church on Sunday our society does not regard Sabbath keeping as sin but the Bible does. Many do not regard the breaking of God’s 4th commandment (Sabbath-breaking) as sin yet these same persons regard the breaking of God’s 7th commandment (Adultery) as sin. Why would it be a sin to break God’s 7th commandment but not a sin to break God’s 4th commandment? Nowhere is this justified by the Bible. The Bible says the commandments are all equal. “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker” (James 2:10-11).

A baptized Christian obeys God’s commandments

1 John 2:4 He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. This clearly means a Sabbath breaker like an adulterer or a liar live in sin. If you are a Sabbath-breaker and you were baptized your baptism is not valid you need to be re-baptized.

A Further Note:

The Bible clearly teaches that the Gospel is given exclusively to the Church of God and is not preached outside the Church of God. Consequently one cannot hear and believe the Gospel except they come in contact with the Church of God. The Church of God is made up of Jesus Christ (its Head) and the saints, with God the Father above us all. It is exclusively to the saints -those who keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 12:17) that God has revealed the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations Col 1:26, and it is exclusively the saints that God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, in Christ Jesus (Col 1:27). The saints are Christ’s ambassadors, through whom God is making his appeal (2 Cor 5:19-20. They are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved (2 Cor 2:15). No other group on the planet has received the Gospel or authority to preach it. No one can hear the Gospel except through the saints. The saints are called upon to contend for this Gospel (Jude 3) and to entrust it to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Tim 2:2).

Those who come in contact with the Gospel therefore, also come in contact with the Church of God and its practices of worship. The Gospel is preached not only in word but in deed. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds (Matt 5:16). Those who are called into the Church follow our example (2 Thess 3:7) and become imitators of us and of the Lord; (1 Thess 1: 6). And so they too become a model to all the believers (1 Thess 1: 7). Those who come into the Church are instructed to put into practice whatever they have learned or received or heard, or see in us (Phil 4:9)

That is how God in his wisdom has designed the Gospel to be preached and practiced in the world. Israel was “the Church in the Wilderness” God said he had not dealt likewise with any other nation. Israel alone was called to be a light to the nations and entrusted with the oracle of God. That is what the spiritual Israel of God is today.

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not dealt likewise with any other nation. Israel alone was called to be a light to the nations and entrusted with the oracle of God. That is what the spiritual Israel of God is today.

■ *Drew DeJarnette*

You say that the bible clearly teaches that the Gospel is the exclusive rights of the COG. I have strong issues with this statement. Your statement has several implications.

The first one is that HWA had direct revelation from God and was thus a prophet. However, it can be shown (and many have shown it) that HWA borrowed a large portion of the COG doctrines from other sources, i.e. not from God. The most obvious example is his most famous and influential book, the United States and Britain in Prophecy. A similar book written by J.H. Allen several years before Armstrong was a minister contains much of the information Armstrong published. Often times, there is word for word similarities to the extent of calling it plagiarism. The problem is, Armstrong claimed that his information was from a direct line with God. This example is not unique. I dare say none of the COG's doctrine are unique and that you can find the holy days, clean and unclean, sabbath, and much more being observed by other groups before Armstrong came on the scene. If one argues that HWA received direct revelation from God and that no one else on the planet has received such revelation, how can you explain the similarities between the COG movement and the duplication of doctrine from pre-COG organizations. This does not even address the many failed prophecies of HWA concerning the immanent return of Christ that he never occurred in his lifetime, which I will not get into here.

Second, your statement implies that no other church has access to God's Holy spirit and that his Spirit does not indwell in members of non-COG congregations. Or, at the very least that one could definitively prove that those in the COG movement have a much stronger connection to God and His blessings and miracles. Personal experience had taught me otherwise. I know first hand that people outside of the COG are influenced by the Holy Spirit. One such example is in healing. I know people very well who have had miraculous healing after being administered to by non-COG ministers. If the Holy Spirit is not in work in them, how can one explain this? Why would God allow a healing of this sort as it would only reinforce their lawless beliefs? Would someone who was healed in their faith movement really consider that God was not present there? How could they justify searching for the "true" church if they new God was at work where they are? The only explanation I can think of is that the miracles are demonic in origin, which I cannot and will not accept. Furthermore, WWCG preached that their members had

a lower divorce rate and overall happier families as a direct result of the COG being God's chosen people. I find no statistical evidence for such a claim, nor do I find it accurate based upon my experiences. We in the COG have just as many unhappy families, divorces, "rebellious" children, etc. than any other church or even in the secular world.

Third, your quote from Col 1 is out of context. Colossians was written to a first century church so to use the text to imply a modern revelation is misinterpret what the author is writing. The greek work used for mystery conveys a previously unknown truth that has now been revealed and cannot be interpreted before its divine revelation. Paul is using the term in reference to what Christ came to do and the mystery revealed to the apostles which was sent out with the gospel. We cannot take that scripture to imply that all generation preceding the COG movement were in a time of unrevealed truth and that God has revealed the mystery of law-keeping to a modern generation.

With this said, I think it is important to state that I am a MAP candidate and have every interest to serve Christ, wherever that takes me. But, the law is a sign on the road, but not the road itself. The law adds absolutely nothing to my salvation (Romans in its entirety). I am saved by the works of Christ. No works of mine can come close to or have any bearing on my salvation. Only my faith in His righteousness can do that. It is because of His saving Grace that I do good works in order to bring others to Him, not to bring them to the COG. I have no interest in "filling our pews", but have every interest in bringing people to Christ.

■ *Drew*

The above response is mine, but it listed me as guest so I thought I would clarify as to my name. This is Drew DeJarnette.

■ *CGI Toronto*

Hi Drew,

To identify yourself in comments, you can either create a Disqus account or enter your Name and Email address with each comment

■ *Georgeramocan*

The name "Church of God" (COG) is not to be confused with the corporate titles given to various groups and congregations within the Church of God. The WCG led by Mr. Armstrong was a corporate group within the COG – it did

not constitute the COG as many erroneously believe. The Church of God did not originate with Mr. Armstrong.

Drew, if you read my comment carefully, I think you'll see that there is no need for extended comments relating to Mr. Armstrong and the WCG. My comment clearly defined that the Church of God is headed by Jesus Christ, not Mr. Armstrong as you suggested. The Church of God is made up of the "saints" – those God has called out of the world and given His Holy Spirit. The Church of God is not an organization but a spiritual organism. It predates the Church in the wilderness and the New Testament, hence members of the COG included Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who will be part of the first resurrection with us the saints in God's Church today.

There is therefore no need for us to discuss Mr. Armstrong and the WCG in this post. The subject of this post is "IS REBAPTISM NECESSARY?"

On another note, to all our readers, we welcome your comments. However, simply stating one's opinions, feelings and personal experiences on the subject isn't sufficient. We are looking for a rigorous exploration of the scriptures to bring light to this subject.

■ *Drew D*

It has been my experience that many disagreements are not solved by extensive debate, but by having clear definitions. Many times people have very similar ideas, but define terms differently, and so debate on issues they agree upon. For that reason, I thank you for defining the terms you used. With that said, I would say that I agree with your previous post but disagree on the definition of keeping God's commandments. Though that is a different topic and can be discussed elsewhere.

■ *Bro. Adrian*

Hi Bro. Drew,

Thanks for your posts. Let's not view this thread as a debate, but rather a discussion. In a debate, both sides are intractable and entrenched in their "positions". Unlike many religious organizations, we are not intractable. We are open to God's word and we will change when we can see from God's word that we are wrong or our understanding is incomplete. As we mutually and publicly explore God's word, everyone benefits. I think it's great that others can see that we are not all yellow pencils forced to believe whatever a man says. We can think

for ourselves and read God's word for ourselves. It's also good for them to see the reverence we have for God's word and how we reason with each other based on God's word.

What's most important is that we hold God's word paramount and we treat each other with mutual respect, honour and grace. Please see my recent post on a great example of humility that we can all learn from. <http://wp.me/p1gmRv-bZ>

We look forward to more contributions from you and I hope everyone will approach this delicate topic with the utmost care, respect and concern for one another.

With respect,

Bro. Adrian

■ *George*

Hi Drew.

As Pastor Ramocan said, HWA and the COG are not synonymous. Just because we are in the COG does not mean that we automatically stop sinning. Therefore, your comments regarding HWA are irrelevant to the discussion.

Moreover, the distinction is that when we sin in the COG we can confess our sins and receive forgiveness. How do you receive forgiveness when you are deceived and you don't even believe you need to ask forgiveness for your sins? If I celebrate Christmas, Easter and keep Sunday as the Lord's day and yet don't believe these are contrary to God's way then am I confessing my sin? You don't believe that breaking the 4th commandment is sin? Substituting for the 4th commandment is a sin. In fact, the 4th commandment deals with the issue or spirit of worship. Worship deals with what we believe about God and His way. Therefore, what we believe or our doctrines constitute our faith. If we keep holidays that were never commanded by God, invent a day of worship which God never authorized, then we are sinning no matter how "good" we are.

Regarding healing to identify God's people let me ask you a question. I know many people who are prayed for who do not receive God's healing gift. Are they Christians? Are some of them really good people? Do some of them have faith to believe? Therefore, don't determine doctrine by whether someone is healed or not. The first and only standard for truth is God's word not man's experience.

■ *Drew D*

George,

Are you saying that those who are in the Church of God are obeying God's commandments 100% as we should (theoretically since practically this is impossible)? You say those who in the COG can confess and receive forgiveness because we have zero deception. This implies a single unified set of doctrines that all those in the body of Christ must adhere to with no exception. As you say, those who keep Christmas cannot repent because they do not know it is sin. The contra positive would be: Those in the COG know and agree on every aspect of what sin is, since anything less would not allow us to repent and belong to the body of Christ.

One example is going out to eat on the Sabbath. Some would define this as "Sabbath-breaking". Following your argument above, no one who purchases food on the Sabbath without repenting for it cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Merely going to church on Saturday does not classify as keeping the Sabbath. If we are to condemn those who do not go to church on Saturday as "Sabbath-breakers" unable to repent and enter the Kingdom, we would need an exhaustive list of what it means to break the Sabbath to ensure that no one unknowingly loses their salvation (A similar argument would then apply to all of God's Laws).

I argue, as I believe Paul does as well in Romans 3, that this is what Grace is. While each should be convinced in their own hearts of their conviction (Romans 8), Grace covers those who are in the body of Christ who sin unintentionally. Those who think going out to eat on the Sabbath is a sin had better not do it. Those who think it is acceptable may do so. Each is doing so unto the Lord.

Why then, should Grace only be for those who keep the Sabbath? I am not arguing that the Sabbath is done away with or is unimportant. But I am certainly not arguing that those who worship Christ on Sunday are banned from the presence of God. Who am I to judge their hearts? May God judge them as righteous and raise them up if He so chooses.

In regards to baptism, it is an external sign of a humble and repentant soul. Certainly the sacrament is important and should be performed. It is not to perfection that we baptised, but to Christ who is perfect. It is a sign of our heart, not our salvation. The Holy Spirit, however, is a sign of our salvation. The question is not then about the sacrament of baptism, but of the laying on of hands.

■ *Pastor Ramocan*

Bro Drew

I find that when it comes to discussing the Sabbath those who do not regard the Sabbath as binding on Christians shift the rules.

So let's forget about the Sabbath for a moment and allow me ask you a direct question. Do you believe that a person who lives a lifestyle of adultery or a lifestyle of breaking any of the other nine commandments is living in sin?

Do not respond by saying we must not judge. That would be evading the question. I am asking about the principle of living a lifestyle of breaking God's commandments.

The issue here is not simply about the Sabbath, it is about obedience to God. We have been highlighting the Sabbath because this is the only one of the 10 Commandments people believe it's ok to live a lifestyle of breaking and not sinning.

For me the Sabbath is no more important than the other nine commandments. I believe that if one is a perfect Sabbath keeper yet live a lifestyle of breaking any of the other nine of God's commandments, that person is living in sin. Do you believe this?

Your direct answer to my question will help to better understand your arguments concerning the Sabbath.

■ *Drew D*

This issue is deeper than the simple act of keeping a particular law. The Pharisees were very good and meticulous at keeping the letter of the Law. However, they completely missed the entire underlying purpose of the Law. Paul points out, as has been mentioned in this thread, that the Law teaches what sin is. It does not do so simply by giving commands we are to blindly follow. There is a purpose and a principal spiritual application each individual law gives.

Paul says we are not under the Law, but under grace (Romans 8). He continues by saying this does not give us a license to sin. In my opinion, sin is the violation spiritual nature of the Law. For example, the commandment against adultery is not in place to stop us from committing adultery, but to teach us to love our spouse. The concept of adultery was applied to the Israelites as they worshiped (committed adultery with) other gods. The sin was that they were not loving the true God.

Jesus expands on this in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. One famous example is that of murder. The sin is not the act of ending the life of a fellow human being (for there were provisions for doing so) but against our evil motives and specifically, hate of our brother. If we keep the Law but miss the purpose and do not understand the spiritual implications (as the Pharisees did) we are in worse shape than if we did not attempt to keep the Law. This is the very thing that Paul was writing against in Romans. The Jewish Christians were condemning the Gentile Christians for not keeping the legality or letter (if I may use those terms) of the Law. One example of Paul's rebuttal was, you who say do not steal, do you yourself steal (ch 2)?

The purpose of the Law is to put our hearts towards God and towards our brothers and sisters. Briefly, the purpose then of the Sabbath is to point towards a humility towards God and a hope for His eternal rest (Heb 4). It is not in my opinion (and in your based upon my understanding of your comments) a "test" command to weed out those who are not true believers.

Do answer your questions directly, yes those who break the commandment of adultery are under sin. Not because they committing the physical act per say, but because of their heart and their intentions. Those who keep Sunday, do so to the Lord and can glean the same spiritual understanding as do those who keep Saturday. The Hebrew for Sabbath means "rest". It is not so much a matter of the day of the week, but the purpose, what it represents, and what we can gain from it.

While I think it would be important to talk about the process in which the day of worship changed from Saturday to Sunday, that is off the topic for this post. I believe you can understand my stance on baptism based upon the information I have presented.

■ [Bro. Adrian](#)

Dear Bro. Drew,

Thank you for your comment. This is obviously a topic that you have thought a lot about. With your permission, I would like to point out a potentially fatal flaw in your reasoning. The crux of your argument appears to be:

- a) The law exists for a higher purpose than simply telling us what not to do.
- b) We must come to understand the spiritual intent of the law because, in your opinion, sin is the violation of the spiritual nature of the law.
- c) Once we understand the intent, we can align our hearts with that purpose and in so doing, please God.

You give a couple of examples of this (i.e., adultery, and murder), stating that it is not the act that is the sin, but the breaking of the intent of the law. You open your comment with the statement that the Pharisees were very good and meticulous at keeping the letter of the law; you then state later that if we keep the Law but miss the purpose and spiritual implications, as the Pharisees did, we are in worse shape than if we did not attempt to keep the law. You then conclude that the purpose of the Sabbath is to point towards humility toward God and a hope for His eternal rest. You then state that those who keep Sunday do so to the Lord and can glean the same spiritual understanding as those who keep Saturday.

The Flaw in Your Reasoning

In a nutshell, you reason that A leads to B and that if one has B, one no longer needs A. This, as you state several times in your post, is your opinion. It does not appear to be God's. When speaking to the Pharisees about the meticulous nature with which they kept the Law, Christ said,

Matt. 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Yes, Christ came and showed us the higher, spiritual intent of the Law (the love of God), but in no way did He discard the basic application of the law. He defines sin as the transgression of the law.

Christ's reasoning is A lead to B, once you have B, make sure you keep A as your foundation. In fact, the Hebrews were upbraided for needing to go back to the foundational principles of what they had been taught:

Heb. 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb. 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb. 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The spiritual intent of the law, fulfills the law, it does not negate it.

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

It is not, as you said in your post, a matter of “blindly following” commands. It is a matter of realizing that obedience leads to understanding. This is why David said:

Psa. 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

It is the realization that understanding doesn't come all at once that causes me to take exception with your statement, “if we keep the Law but miss the purpose and spiritual implications, as the Pharisees did, we are in worse shape than if we did not attempt to keep the law.” This simply isn't true. None of us understand the purpose and spiritual implications of the law when we first come to observe it. This doesn't mean we should discard it. Our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and the Pharisees. It exceeds their righteousness because we go on to a greater understanding, not because we discard the law and “leave it undone”.

We must do His commandments in order to gain understanding. In your reasoning, there is only the sin of omission not the sin of commission. However, it is not just a matter of omitting to love God. The scripture makes it clear that sins of commission will be punished while the fulfillment of the intent of the law will be rewarded:

Rom. 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Rom. 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

God is never unclear about what sin is and how it will be punished:

Ezek. 20:21 Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

You say that the purpose of the Sabbath is simply to teach humility and therefore Sunday-keepers needn't worry about keeping the Sabbath. However, this calls

into question, why God would create the sun when, as I said in my original post, God created the sun and moon to enable man to know the appointed times to worship God. You will see this in Gen 1:14, where God says:

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: The word “seasons” in this verse is the Hebrew word “moad”. Here is the definition from Strong’s:

4150. dEowø̄m mow{ed, mo-ade´; or dEoOm moled, mo-ade´; or (feminine) hødDowø̄m moweadah(2 Chronicles 8:13), mo-aw-daw´; from 3259; properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand):—appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn(-ity), synogogue, (set) time (appointed).

God has set times for us to worship Him. The weekly and annual Sabbaths are part of a grand system of worship (the understanding of which, God only reveals to us after we obey Him). Obedience leads to understanding. I would caution anyone against teaching that the observance of God’s holy Sabbaths are unnecessary.

A Final Thought

I’d like to leave you with a final thought.

What if you’re wrong?

Let’s say we are wrong. If we recommend that someone be re-baptized and it turns out you are right and it was unnecessary, what’s the worst that would happen? They didn’t have to pay for the baptism, and it wasn’t painful. However, if you tell someone not to be re-baptized and it turns out that it was necessary, what are the consequences?

Given that your position is not clear, and we are dealing with such a profound life issue, why not err on the side of caution?

Conclusion

This has been an interesting discussion and I think there is enough information here for all of us to think more deeply about whether or not one needs to be re-baptized when coming into the Church of God.

Thank you Bro. Drew and everyone else who posted comments. Thank you to everyone who has been following this thread. Let's continue to search the scriptures and demonstrate that even though we may disagree, we don't have to be disagreeable. We are all on a journey and we realize that understanding comes over time. We're happy to be challenged and encouraged to search God's word. Let's make the word of God paramount and, as iron sharpens iron, let's help each other to gain a greater grasp of the scriptures.

■ *Wswordofgodspeaks7*

Acts 15 (New King James Version)

Acts 15

Conflict over Circumcision

1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. 3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. 4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

The Jerusalem Council

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that

through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ[a] we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. 13 And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 ‘ After this I will return

And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;

I will rebuild its ruins,

And I will set it up;

17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,

Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,

Says the LORD who does all these things.’[b]

18 “Known to God from eternity are all His works.[c] 19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality,[d]from things strangled, and from blood. 21 For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

The Jerusalem Decree

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas,[e] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23 They wrote this, letter by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”[f]—to whom we gave no such commandment— 25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that you

abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.[g] If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

■

Pastor Ramocan

REGARDING ACTS 15 PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE
ON THE SUBJECT.PUBLISHED BY THE UCG

The Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15: What Was Decided?

Some people believe that the early Church’s decision in Acts 15 freed Christians from the need to obey the laws revealed in the Old Testament. But is this the case? To understand what was really decided there, we need to look at and understand the historical, cultural and scriptural background.

From the beginning of gentile conversions, “certain men . . . from Judea” insisted that “unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). Notice that they viewed circumcision as a matter of salvation. It was a huge issue to them!

So Paul took the matter before Church leadership to be officially resolved (verse 2). “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses’” (verse 5). By the “law of Moses” they meant the imperatives of the Sinai Covenant, which would have included perhaps some of its rituals and ceremonies—and definitely circumcision.

At the Church conference in Jerusalem, both Peter and Paul addressed the assembled elders. The matter of circumcision, Peter noted, had already been settled by God Himself (verses 7-9). Peter’s testimony gave proof that God gave the Holy Spirit to gentiles who were not circumcised (Acts 10:44-48). As a result, they could only conclude that God does not require the circumcision of male gentile converts.

Paul and Barnabas then spoke, describing how God had performed miracles through them in calling gentiles into the Church (verse 12).

Four restrictions on new gentile converts

James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, then issued a concluding statement: “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (verses 19-20, NIV).

Some people seize on these words to argue that nothing more was required of early Christians—that they (and we) need not keep other laws found in the Old Testament.

But does this view really make sense? James said nothing about murder, stealing, lying, taking God’s name in vain or a host of other sins. By this rationale, should we conclude that Christians are now free to do these evil things? Of course not! So why, then, did James list only these four restrictions—”to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood”?

The link connecting each of these requirements is idolatry. Specifically, each was directly associated with the pagan forms of worship common in the areas from which God was calling gentiles into the Church. Each also violated specific biblical commands (Exodus 20:2-6; Leviticus 20:10-20; Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26-27).

It is evident, however, that the apostles also had another reason for singling out these links to idolatry. They wanted to make sure that new non-Jewish converts would have immediate access to learning the teachings of God’s Word—the Holy Scriptures (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:15).

Notice the reason James expressed for listing those particular prohibitions: “For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21, NIV). The purpose for this somewhat puzzling concluding statement now becomes clear: The apostles wanted to ensure that every new gentile convert would be able to avail himself of that instruction as the words of Moses were “read . . . every Sabbath.”

Access to the Scriptures

In that day no one had their own copies of the Bible. Scrolls were handwritten and enormously expensive. Only the very wealthy could afford any kind of personal library. The only places where one could hear the Bible regularly read was at the

Jerusalem temple or in the Jewish synagogues that existed in larger cities of the Roman Empire.

By renouncing any associations with idolatry and choosing to worship only the true God of the Scriptures, these new gentile converts could attend the Jewish synagogue. There they would be able to learn the basic teachings of the Holy Scriptures every Sabbath. In areas where Christian congregations were not yet established, the synagogue was the only organized training center where the Scriptures could be learned.

Paul plainly confirms the importance of new converts being instructed from the Scriptures. In his letter to Timothy—a young minister who helped him serve these gentile converts—Paul makes the point that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

He even reminded the gentile converts in Rome that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). At that time, the only “Scripture” and “word of God” they knew was what we today call the Old Testament. The New Testament didn’t yet exist.

Paul clearly expected his gentile converts to put effort into both hearing and learning the inspired Word of God. Yet when the Church first began accepting gentile converts, it did not yet have the capacity to instruct non-Jewish believers in the Scriptures in every city—especially in those cities having no Christian congregations.

But the Jews welcomed uncircumcised gentiles into the synagogue to learn God’s truth—providing they made a commitment to serve only the true and living God of the Bible.

The New Testament shows that the earliest gentile converts quickly became familiar with those Scriptures. Because the Scriptures used by the Jews and Christians were exactly the same, the apostles were comfortable having new gentile believers join the Jews and Jewish Christians who attended synagogue services each Sabbath.

The Bible itself records that many gentiles first heard Paul’s preaching in the synagogue where they were attending alongside the Jews (Acts 17:1-4, 10-12, 16-17). Both the synagogue and the Holy Scriptures were central to Paul’s work in converting Jews and gentiles alike.

Both Paul and his converts regarded the Holy Scriptures—as taught by the Jews in the synagogues—as the foundation of their beliefs. Thus he did not always have to explain every detail of the way of life these new converts were to learn. When he was in a city for only a short time, Paul could concentrate his efforts on explaining the role and mission of Jesus Christ and then move on to another city.

He knew that gentile converts could continue receiving basic instruction in the Scriptures and God's way of life by attending the regular synagogue services. And the fact that, in his letters to gentile congregations, he quoted extensively from the same Scriptures used by the Jews provides clear evidence that all gentile converts had access to that instruction regardless of where they lived.

■ *Sis. Teena*

If I may add further enlightenment on this question: Is re-baptism necessary?

Eph. 4:4-6 is the NT profession of faith. It speaks of one hope, one baptism. Baptism and hope go hand in hand. What you believe when you are baptized is your hope. Therefore, if your hope has been enlightened to the gospel of the Kingdom, the resurrection (inheriting eternal life) and being born into the family of God, this is a far different hope than heaven and the immortality of the soul.

Notice in Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

There is precedence on re-baptism: In Acts 19:1-7 Paul found a group of disciples in Ephesus who had been baptized by John the Baptist. Paul acknowledged they were disciples, but found the need to re-baptize them in Christ.

Acts 19:3 And he (Paul) said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

v. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

v. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This is a clear example that baptism goes hand in hand with your hope. The disciples of John the Baptist did not understand the fullness of hope in Christ Jesus. Just like Apollos who had received only the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-26). Aquila and Priscilla had to teach him "the way of God more perfectly" or completely. Acts 19:8 goes on to show Paul speaking boldly for three months on the Kingdom of God to further enlighten those disciples in Ephesus of this hope.

Some may argue Acts 19 is regarding baptism in the name of Christ. John did not baptize people in his name, rather God's name. John 1:33 He that sent me to baptize with water refers to YVHV. It continues with John 3:13-15 Jesus was baptized of John (but not in John's name). Christ allowed this to be so in order to fulfill all righteousness.

If our Lord Jesus Christ would allow himself to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness, surely we can follow His example to be re-baptized into a new hope? Clearly, our hope at baptism determines our faith. If our hope is enlightened, there is a need for re-baptism to fulfill all righteousness. In the end, it is a personal choice to humble your will to fulfill all righteousness.

One last thought, it is possible to receive another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel: II Cor. 11:4 For if he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you have received another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him.

Ultimately, we must be moved to act according to our convictions.

Grace & peace,

Sis. Teena

▪ *Luana*

Teena,

Thought you might benefit from this series of teachings on the doctrine of baptisms. There are different types of baptisms. Very interesting:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL90nL3n7fs&feature=relmfu>

▪ *Luana*

Adrian,

In regards to the doctrine of baptisms, here is an interesting video teaching by Michael Rood on site in Isreal.

▪ *Bro. Adrian*

Hi Luana,

I'm happy to look at the video, however, there is no link. Also, let's be careful to base our discussion on the word of God.

■ *Luana*

Sorry Adrian,

Here's the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL90nL3n7fs&feature=relmfu>

It's a series of parts but very good biblical history from a tour done in Israel. There is always something new to learn.

Blessings,
Luana

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by Pastor Ramocan, Nov. 27, 2011



As we return to our home from the Feast of Tabernacles, it is truly awesome to think that for a whole week we had the opportunity to dwell with God; to learn to serve Him and to rejoice in His presence. The rich sermons, beautiful musical items, and joyous fellowship all worked together to make this a most blessed Feast! The baptismal ceremony toward the end of the Feast was a great highlight as the congregation assembled at the pool to witness six new persons added to the Body of Christ!

However, as we return from the Feast, the wear and tear of life can soon set in and wear away much of what we learned. The challenge for us is “Keeping the Feast Alive” as brother Zion Hezekiah reminded us in his most recent sermonette. One way he suggested we do this is to “practice the things we learned at the Feast”. How do you do this?

Practice What We Learned

First, you should take some quiet time to go over the notes you made during the sermons at the Feast. Take time to reflect on the texts to gain a deeper understanding of what God is saying to you. If you mislaid your notes, visit the church website at www.cgitoronto.org and listen again to some of the sermons that are posted there (*note: We have a limit on the number of videos we can upload per week. If*

you don't see a particular sermon, please check back as they are being posted as quickly as possible over the next couple of weeks.)

The scriptures admonish us to exercise ourselves unto godliness and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In 1 Timothy 4:7, the Apostle Paul states “Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness because it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” Secondly, we can “keep the feast alive” by continually placing our hope in the coming Kingdom of God. It is in this hope that we will find the solutions to the challenges and cares we are likely to face. Hope in the Kingdom of God is the vaccine against giving up. It gives us the power and ability to take hard blows and not give up.

This was the experience the apostle Paul shared with the brethren in Corinth. He said, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.(2 Cor 4:8-9). He went on to say in 2 Cor 6:10 “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

1. Hope in the coming Kingdom of God enables us to endure suffering.

2 Cor 4:16-18 says: Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2. Hope in the coming Kingdom of God enables us to put on godly character.

Rom 5:3-5 says, “...suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

3. Hope enables us to persevere through trial.

James 1:12 says Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

4. When you place your hope in God, He does not give you more than you can bear.

He says in 1 Cor 10:13, No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

5. When you place your hope in God, He comforts you in time of trouble.

2 Cor 12: 9-10 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Fixing Our Eyes & Our Hope

As we return from the Feast of Tabernacles to another year of life in Babylon, let us keep the Feast alive in our hearts by fixing our eyes and our hope on the coming Kingdom of God!

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Thought Pieces > Languages of Love

Search for:

by [Sis. Stephanie](#), Jun. 8, 2012



On Sabbath afternoon of May 19, the Family Ministry introduced married couples and single adults to Gary Chapman's "The 5 Love Languages" by which he teaches how partners communicate love to each other. Your primary love language is that form of communication by which you most easily "hear" and receive love.

The 5 love languages are:

1. **Words of Affirmation** – verbally approving or affirming your spouse
2. **Acts of Service** – doing something for your spouse that you know they would like for you to do
3. **Receiving Gifts** – as an expression of love, emphasizing the thoughtfulness and effort behind the gift
4. **Quality Time** – giving your spouse your undivided attention
5. **Physical Touch** – loving touches including hugs, pats on the back, holding hands

Communicating to your spouse in their primary love language will fill “their emotional love” tank and inspire them to reciprocate that love.

God also communicated His love thus: He gave us a “gift” by which also he “touched” our sinful lives and affirmed us in words as children of God. This was an “act of service;” we couldn’t do for ourselves, so we need to reflect on this in “daily devotion and worship.”

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Thought Pieces > **Let Your Light Shine**

Search for:

by [Bro. Patrick](#), Jun. 17, 2011



You and I are selected by God to be a light to the world that is suffering in moral decay and spiritual darkness. In other words, we are to be directly engaged in helping the world, while being careful not to embrace its values and ways on us. Rather, to let the world benefit by our example. There are many ways in which we can let our light shine as on people:

1. Being a reflector of light

A reflector is a lustrous object that is that reproduces a beam of light.

Christians, by reflecting radiant light from the Lord Jesus Christ using the glorious word of God, we can illuminate a lost and lonely world, which is shrouded in spiritual darkness.

They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. (Psalm 34:5)

2. Being a refractor of light

A refractor is a device that alters the direction of a beam of light .

*Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be vessel for honor,
sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.
(2 Timothy 2:21)*

By being vessels fit for the Master's purpose, we can receive glorious revelations from the Lord which can touch the lives of many people.

3. Using light to expose

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.
(Ephesians 6:17)*

Brethren, by wielding the spirit which is the word of God , we can expose the reality of evil. As children of the light shining out of darkness, we can help unbelievers turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). God will open their hearts and minds to see the wonderful light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

4. Being an enlightener

An enlightener gives clarifying information, or teaches.

For you will light my lamp. The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. (Psalms 18:28)

Brethren, by teaching God's uncompromised word, we can enlighten the world about Jesus Christ and help them acknowledge the darkness around them.

5. Light as a beacon

A beacon is a symbol of hope, an inspiration or a guiding light.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
(John 14:6)

Brethren, by being a beacon of light, we can help people escape out of darkness and point them to the source of life — Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Light. By doing good works and acts of kindness, we can draw those who are in need and direct them to God's unfailing love.

Conclusion

As light, we desire to live in a way that pleases God and bring praise and honor to Him and not ourselves. May our speech always be with grace and let our light shine. May our light shine before humankind, that they (the world) may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16). For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

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News > [Michael Pearl – To Train Up a Child](#)

Search for:

by [Pastor Adrian](#), Sep. 3, 2011



Question

Thanks again for a very well prepared and vital [sermon](#). I hope that the church took it to heart...

There is one disagreement that I have however regarding your comment about Michael Pearl and his book, "Train Up a Child". I have his book and found it very helpful in approaching child rearing in a Godly and respectful manner. It is unfortunate that this terrible incident of the little girl who was abused and killed at the hands of her adopted father, has cast a negative light upon Michael Pearl. In fact, CNN did a hit job on the Pearl's portraying them as complicit and ignorant. However, the book does not say anything to provoke such an evil act as the adopted father has committed. The man is clearly an abusive and wicked father who went far beyond what Michael Pearl advocates and even contradicts much of the Pearl's Godly advice. In fact, many children die every year at the hands of abusive parents which go unreported. The only reason the Pearl's were featured, was due to their strong Christian stand on child rearing.

Answer

Thanks for your question. I'm glad you found Michael Pearl's book helpful. As parents, we face unprecedented challenges and we must be resourceful in facing these challenges. In drawing on resources, we must take care that we discern false doctrine. Doctrine drives behaviour. The Bible warns us repeatedly to guard our doctrinal beliefs. Doctrine is the lens through which we perceive and our perception influences our behaviour. An analysis of Pearl's doctrine can be found [here](#).

I think it is unfair to conclude that the Schatzes are wicked people. They may be. It's also possible that they are sincere people who were committed to rearing their children according to their understanding. We do not know the complete story of Lydia's torture. We do know, however, that her beatings were interrupted by frequent prayer breaks, which indicates the Schatzes were adhering to a spiritually-based doctrine. We also know that Pearl teaches the importance of breaking a child's will. It is easy to understand how a parent might prolong a "spanking" when they believe a child is being defiant and they need to break its will. If Pearl quoted the scripture in Prov 13:24: "He that spares his rod hates his son: but he that loves him chastens him betimes.", without providing a proper scriptural understanding of this text to his readers, then he leaves his readers to misinterpret the scripture and to act in abusive ways toward their children.

God is a Family

As a member of God's church, you have the advantage of understanding the gospel of the kingdom of God. You understand that God is a family and that He is in the process of expanding His family. Michael Pearl does not understand this. You can [see his statement of beliefs here](#). When we understand that our families reflect the family of God, we will never resort to the torture of our children. This fundamental doctrine of God as a family shapes everything we do.

Our children are not given to us to do with as we please. They are not our property. They are God's children, given into our care, so we can raise them to be what He wants them to be. Many believe their children are properly trained because they have a good secular education and have learned society's concept of right and wrong. This is not what God has in mind for training our children. On the other hand, those who understand their responsibility to train their children according to God's standards must do so with the full understanding of the God family. We must understand the kingdom of God and the family of God in order to gain a deeper and proper biblical understanding of how to raise our children.

Michael Pearl's Responsibility

The absence of the context of the gospel combined with the advice to use 1/4 inch plumbing supply line to hurt a small child is a recipe for disaster. Lydia Schatz is not the only child to be killed by parents who are followers of Pearl.

While journalists can be very tricky in setting people up for interviews and portraying them in a context that is different than the interview, I found the piece by Gary Tuchman to be fair. Michael Pearl had ample opportunity to share his teachings in his own words. The example he gives of how he would beat a 7-year old child with 15 lashes of a 1/4 inch plumbing supply tube was excessive and chilling. Parents who lack critical thinking skills can easily fall into the trap of blindly following such advice and not understanding what they are doing.

Again, if Michael Pearl does not explicitly provide proper scriptural understanding of the biblical texts regarding disciplining children, he is complicit in the misguided acts of his followers.

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Related

- *George*

Thank you for your response to my question. I checked the reference you linked to regarding the Pearl's doctrinal understanding on Original Sin and don't see the relevance of this to the discussion at hand of Child rearing in general and Corporal punishment in particular. Sometimes the obvious and clear understanding of God's word in context is all that is needed to establish proper biblical child rearing principles. Hence, God enables most Christians of varying denominations to benefit from His word in raising Godly children. Just as societies who have established principles of Judeo Christian understanding have benefited their nations and citizens so Christians who adhere to the simple principles found in Proverbs and other biblical passages benefit their children. There is no need to have an understanding of the True Gospel in order to raise Godly offspring.

My main point in labeling the Schatzes as wicked was to show that this "torture" as you called it, was the unusual outcome of this particular father who chose to beat his child to death. You mention that this is not the only incident of a Parent who read the Train Up a Child book to have killed his child but don't reference it. Moreover, I don't know if there are any other incidents as you referenced but even if there were, considering the book has sold over 500,000 copies, that would hardly be evidence to support your contention that the Pearl's are unbiblical at best and misguided at worst. I also used a switch to discipline my children and didn't need to be told that spanking a child more than several times in the appropriate body area is wrong. It's commonsense. If you read the book you will clearly see that the Pearl's teach to lovingly and carefully discipline your child without losing control. This is supported by the fact that hundreds of thousands of books have been sold and one incident has occurred.

I viewed part of the CNN interview and felt it was very biased against Christians who choose to use corporal punishment. First, the title of the feature was called, "Ungodly Discipline", I suppose that is a definite opinion stated beforehand. They also had the Prosecutor stating his contention that since the Pearl's book was found in the home of the incident, therefore, the Pearl's were complicit. Many people believe that the bible has been the cause of war, ignorance and corruption but that assertion doesn't make it true.

The bottom line is that some parents abuse their children and only a callous and wicked person is capable of beating a child to death irrespective of what their library collection consists of.

■ [Bro. Adrian](#)

Thanks Bro. George for your follow up question. You said that you didn't need to be told spanking a child more than several times is wrong. Not everyone is as stable as you are. Very few have the doctrinal underpinning that you have. Common sense is not so common. Your experience reading Pearl's book can't be used as the norm.

I made the link to the analysis of Pearl's doctrine to demonstrate how flawed belief results in flawed teachings. The fact that Pearl teaches that children do not have original sin is relevant to our discussion. When you combine the underlying belief that parents can save their children

from becoming sinful with the following advice: “A swift whack with the plastic tubing would sting but not bruise. Give 10 licks at a time, more if the child resists. Be careful about using it in front of others — even at church; nosy neighbors might call social workers.”, it doesn’t take much to see how a sincere follower of Pearl’s teachings can end up abusing their child.

The other tragedy I was referring to was that of Sean Paddock. In March of 2004, his mother was charged with murder and Sean’s death was attributed directly to Pearl’s training advice. These murders, of necessity, are public. How many cases of child abuse are out there that are never reported? How many children are seared for life because of what has happened to them at an early age? How many parents don’t understand true doctrine and apply Pearl’s advice beating their children with a plumbing hose to break the will of the child?

Doctrine matters! It frames everything we do.

1Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Prov. 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

For the record, I count myself among those who believe the Bible has been the cause of war, ignorance and corruption. That’s why I introduced my sermon by saying, “The Bible is not enough.” The Bible is a complex book and easily misinterpreted. The true gospel is what unlocks the meaning of the Bible. The Bible is not for everyone. It was written exclusively for God’s people. In the wrong hands, it can be extremely dangerous! You say there is no need to have an understanding of the true gospel in order to raise godly offspring. Perhaps we need to define godly offspring.

By godly offspring, I didn’t mean people who are good citizens, who pay their taxes, contribute to society and go to church. By godly offspring, I meant human beings who are ready to be born into God’s eternal family.

Marriage – a covenant relationship for life between two flawed and very different human beings – is a complex relationship. Layer on top of this complexity, the fiery darts of the devil and you have a recipe for disaster. One in two marriages end in divorce. Of those that remain together, the majority are not really happy and adultery is rampant. Christians are no exception. In fact, Christian pastors may be among the worst offenders. Research done by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth indicates that 37 percent of ministers “have been involved in inappropriate behavior with someone in the church.” Divorce and remarriage among Christian ministers is staggering. There is a growing moral breakdown in the Christian ministry.

The point of my sermon was the foundation of successful child rearing is godly marriage. “Without vision, the people perish.” To achieve God’s vision of marriage, both spouses must be “smitten” by the true gospel. They must understand it, embrace it and love it. Only then will they have the internal drive to engage their spouse in the manner of Christ.

Learning to engage each other in a Christ-like manner will enable them to then raise children with the vision and compassion of Christ. They will see their children as not belonging to them but to God. They will understand that God has entrusted their children to them. They will understand that they are raising, for a time, future members of God’s family. With this understanding, they would never torture or traumatize. Moreover, the relationship they have with each other would be the greatest lesson in godliness for their children.

Through their marriage, their children will learn respect for Christ and the Father, loving expression, respect for authority, commitment to the gospel and fidelity to their partner. These lessons would be embedded deeply into their psyche and as they mature, they will find themselves naturally behaving as their role models. While discipline is absolutely essential, it will never replace the role modeling of human relations that comes from a gospel-based marriage. Moreover, the discipline itself must be based on an understanding of the true gospel and the true identity and potential of children.

The bottom line? Doctrine matters! The true gospel must drive everything we do. We need to embrace the gospel and show the world the true blessings of godly marriage and childrearing. The difference between a gospel-driven family and families that have been blessed by elements of the Bible must be striking. That is our responsibility! Let’s help each other live it!

■ *George*

Adrian said, “To achieve God’s vision of marriage, both husband and wife must be “smitten” by the true gospel. They must understand it, embrace it and love it. Only then will they have the internal drive to engage their spouse in the manner of Christ.

Learning to engage each other in a Christ-like manner will enable them to then raise children with the vision and compassion of Christ.”

Although I understand your point about the vision God has for families I still can’t agree with your point that this will make such a significant difference in marriages or child rearing. I think you are discussing two separate points here.

The self evident biblical knowledge about love, patience, training a child, loving your wife, sharing, giving etc. etc. is clearly communicated to even the simplest of bible readers. God would clearly want to have people benefit from following His moral principles so that they would both be blessed and held accountable to those principles which inevitably would be violated due to human nature.

I have looked into the two cases of parents who killed their children after reading Micheal Pearl's book. They are obviously troubled people who lack the love of God. As I said before, the book has sold over 500,000 copies and two children have been killed. If there were a significant doctrinal problem with the Pearl's regarding corporal punishment there would be many more deaths attributed to them.

In fact, many parents in the WCG would use corporal punishment and they had the true gospel.

■ [Bro. Adrian](#)

Hi Bro. George,

I think you have gotten to the heart of our difference in perspective.

You say, "The self evident biblical knowledge about love, patience, training a child, loving your wife, sharing, giving etc. etc. is clearly communicated to even the simplest of bible readers. God would clearly want to have people benefit from following His moral principles so that they would both be blessed and held accountable to those principles which inevitably would be violated due to human nature."

I don't believe this is the case.

I believe the Bible is not written for everyone. I believe it is a coded book written specifically for God's saints. It is only God who can unlock the Bible and He only unlocks it to those in the first fruits harvest.

"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matt 13:11

This doesn't make those of us in the first fruits harvest better than others, it just means we are called earlier for his purpose.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor 15:22-23

When Adam turned his back on God, he cut himself and his children off from God. The great lesson we are all involved in is to learn that man cannot live without God. To say that “God would clearly want to have people benefit from His moral principles” is true, but there is a time order associated with God’s desire.

Through God’s great design, He is redeeming mankind, but in a specific order. The Bible is a best-selling book but it is not for everyone. The fact that people read it and benefit from it is wonderful, but that is not God’s focus. They will have their time to learn the deep truths of the Bible:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Rev 20:12

With respect to corporal punishment, I didn’t understand the comment, “In fact, many parents in the WCG would use corporal punishment and they had the true gospel.” I don’t believe I ever said understanding the gospel negates corporal punishment or that corporal punishment is wrong. The Bible endorses corporal punishment. My point is that an understanding of the true gospel puts child rearing and corporal punishment in proper perspective and that perspective drives and dictates our behaviour.

Teaching parents to beat a child until you break his or her will is dangerous. Without proper context this will inevitably lead to abuse.

You said, “Although I understand your point about the vision God has for families I still can’t agree with your point that this will make such a significant difference in marriages or child rearing. I think you are discussing two separate points here.” My point is that the vision God has for families **MUST** make a difference in our marriages and childrearing. Understanding the glorious message of the gospel should elevate our marriages and childrearing. Sadly, it often doesn’t.

If a marriage is troubled, a child will become anxious and troublesome. All the corporal punishment in the world will not be as effective as getting to the root cause and bringing Christ and the gospel into the marriage. The foundation of the home is the marriage and the center of the marriage must be Christ. Getting marital relations right first is the key to successful childrearing.

Two children too many have been killed as a result of Pearl’s teaching! Moreover, it doesn’t take much to imagine how many children are suffering from abuse as a result of Pearl’s teaching. Pearl has attempted a noble work, however, without the context of the true gospel, it lends itself to tragic consequences.

Thanks very much for your insightful questions. We may have to agree to disagree. However, the open exchange of ideas is very healthy. Active engagement is how we digest God's word. Thanks for forcing me to think more deeply about what I said and for sharing your perspective.

■ *George*

Hi Adrian.

I appreciate your efforts to explain your point and I agree that the full knowledge of God's plan as revealed in the Gospel should definitely motivate us to have blessed marriages and blessed families.

You believe that the principles of how to have a successful marriage and family are a "mystery" that needs to be revealed. I take exception to that. The principles of a healthy and vibrant marriage are not cloaked in mystery as they are clearly revealed for anyone to see. If the bible says to give and sacrifice for my wife than that is self evident and beneficial. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". For example, many good books have been written by James Dobson, Stephen Covey and other mainstream Christians based on simple, revealed truths in the bible. Remember, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil enables a person to learn both good and evil.

This is why I said you are making two different points here. They mystery of God's plan for man and principles of a healthy marriage. Should we as a church have the best marriages because of our unique and revealed knowledge? Not necessarily because of the application of the biblical principles already stated. However, I believe that the access to God's Holy Spirit and the degree which we yield to it in our lives should enable us to have better marriages.

My point regarding the WCG is that they understood the true gospel and both used corporal punishment the same way as Michael Pearl advocates and yet the divorce rate is high and many of their children fell by the wayside. In fact, I have heard of a high number of abusive and misguided families in the WCG.

In conclusion, I understand the mystery of the bible but that mystery is not cloaking how to have a successful marriage. That mystery is what God is doing to work with Man and how He will reconcile the world and bring about the restoration of all things.

■ *Bro. Adrian*

Hi Bro. George,

I appreciate where you are coming from and I now understand your point about the WCG.

While you may be seeing two different points, I am making one point. And it is this:

Doctrine drives behaviour. The meaning of marriage is rooted in the gospel, however, the true gospel is a mystery. Therefore, only God's Church can truly understand marriage and how to build the high calibre marriages God is looking for.

Some may access aspects of the divine principles of godly marriages, and give great advice on building successful marriages. However, we must see that the gospel goes far deeper and God's vision is far higher than what humans can do on their own. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to access the higher truths of marriage and family. With His Spirit, our understanding will continually grow deeper.

The WCG had the gospel but didn't have a full understanding of it. We are building on their foundational understanding. We are beginning to understand how the gospel drives marriage and family and how marriage and family are the basic building block for community. Hopefully, you have noticed a difference in the CGI ministry compared to the WCG ministry. The WCG had a dictatorial model for the ministry. The WCG didn't make the clear connection between the gospel, family and the ministry. The church is the household of God, therefore, the gospel principles of marriage and family equally apply to the church, as they will ultimately apply to the kingdom of God. We must honour the past but we must not be stuck in it. Knowledge increases. My statement referred to the church today, "upon whom the ends of the world have come."

God's Spirit is not accessible to everyone at this time. The Schatzes are not the only ones who are, as you put it, "troubled and lack the love of God". We are all troubled and lack the love of God unless God heals us with His Spirit. Pearl's book has been sold to 500,000 people – the majority of whom are "troubled and lack the love of God".

While there are many people who desire to have godly families and raise godly children, God is only interested in working with His saints at this time – not the vast majority of mankind. He is getting His saints ready to serve all mankind. We can't afford to be complacent about marriage and family. We know a little about

what it takes to build a godly marriage, but we mustn't think we know it all. The more we know, the more we must realize how much we don't know and the more we must hunger and thirst for more of God's truth. The more we realize how much we don't know, the more we will realize how little the world knows.

1Pet. 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

We must be so astonished by the truth of the gospel and so energized by the power of the Holy Spirit, that when we consider the power of the devil and human nature, what we achieve in our marriages and families can only be described as a miracle. While I respect and have benefited from the work of men like Covey and Dobson, I also see the day when they, if they are not in the firstfruits harvest, will be our students (I say this with all humility).

Thank God for the gospel! Let's help each other to build the types of marriages and families that are worthy of the gospel! In so doing, we will be a greatly needed light and do more to show the way to God's truth than many sermons!

▪ *Bro. Adrian*

Unfortunately, we have another case of child abuse resulting in death. Once again, Michael Pearl's book To Train Up a Child is implicated.

http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2011/10/26/tuchman-hana-williams.cnn?hpt=hp_c2

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Thought Pieces > Only COG in a position to teach on successful marriages?

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by Pastor Adrian, Sep. 3, 2011



Question

I was unclear as to what you meant in your [sermon](#) when you said that only the COG is in a position to teach on successful marriages because of our knowledge of the true gospel. Can you explain this. I know of many non-COG families who live very blessed lives based on biblical principles which are not exclusive to the COG.

Answer

Thank you for your great question!

First, my statement was that the ability to build solid, strong marriages depends on the doctrine of the gospel of the kingdom of God and the gospel of the kingdom of God is the exclusive property of the church of God. Therefore, only the church of God can build the type of marriages that will solve this world's problems.

Many people preach from the Bible, but because they don't understand the gospel of the kingdom of God, they cannot accurately teach the truth of marriage and family. Marriage and family are kingdom of God concepts. Using the Bible to teach on marriage and family without the context of the kingdom of God invariably leads to false teaching.

Biblical Principles Not Enough

Applying biblical principles to marriage will most certainly lead to blessings. That is not enough, however. Marriage is the fundamental building block of society. And, as I said earlier, it is a kingdom of God concept. The church of God (all those who have been called by God and given His Holy Spirit), through its understanding of the gospel, can unlock the meaning of marriage. In doing so, it can understand the extraordinary expectations of a godly marriage. Everyone who practices biblical principles can be blessed in their marriage. But only the church of God can grasp the true purpose and exalted standards of a marriage based on the gospel of the kingdom of God.

This understanding should motivate us to engage God's Holy Spirit to fulfill the mysterious roles of husband and wife. The wife's submission should lead to the development of Christ's character. Christ submitted to the Father's will and suffered wrongfully. In her relationship with her husband, the wife has the opportunity to develop this aspect of Christ's character. God says a meek and quiet spirit is in His sight of great price. The great price He paid for the development of this type of character is the death of His Son.

*1Pet. 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;
1Pet. 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

In the same way that Christ paid the price of His life for the development of this Christ-like character in His wife, husbands, in their relationship with their wives, have the opportunity to develop the extraordinary leadership qualities of Christ. That is, they must be willing to pay the high price of sacrificing themselves for the development of the wife's meek and quiet spirit. If our wives are properly honoured, they never have to "fight for their rights".

Marriage is a Mystery

The marriage relationship is a deep mystery and a great challenge. Marriages can appear happy to outsiders but be riddled with deeply entrenched problems. Those of us who are married and who understand the gospel of the kingdom of God, have an enormous burden placed upon us. We must get the marriage relationship right. It so important that God warns us that our prayers will be hindered if we violate His expectations of this relationship.

1Pet. 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Accomplishment of any scale requires organization. The kingdom of God will achieve incredible accomplishments. It will be highly organized. Unlike human organizations, however, it will be organized based on the family construct. What we learn in our marriages and our families today, has eternal value.

The fundamental problem in every marriage is human nature. Human nature wants to dominate and does not want to be dominated. Applying Biblical principles in our marriage is good but it is not enough if we don't grasp marriage in the context of the gospel of the kingdom of God. For marriage to work the way God planned, we must have God's vision and embrace the full meaning of marriage and the associated spiritual relationship between husband and wife. This is a GREAT mystery. We are privileged to understand it but the understanding we have must compel us to meet God's standard. Our efforts will be rewarded by rich marriages and readiness for our place in God's family.

Later in the same letter quoted earlier and in the same context of building Christ's character, Peter says:

1Pet. 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Getting marriage right according to God's standards is no small feat. When we get the vision of the Kingdom of God clearly in our mind, we realize how short we fall and how much is required of us to get marriage right. If we, filled with the inspiration of the gospel, scarcely overcome our human nature to achieve God's vision of marriage, how much harder is it for those who don't understand?

We're not here just to have blessed marriages. We're here to build the types of marriages that ultimately serve the whole world.

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Related

- *George*

Thanks for your response. However, I still don't see how your statement regarding strong marriages depends on a knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Can you please expand on your statement, "that the ability to build solid, strong marriages depends on the doctrine of the gospel of the kingdom of God and the gospel of the kingdom of God is the exclusive property of the church of God."

Mainstream Christianity also believes that physical marriage is a picture of Christ marrying the church and that this relationship will be manifest in the Kingdom of God.

Thank you,

- [Bro. Adrian](#)

Hi Bro. George,

You've asked a very good question! Although marriage is an institution that's in decline, I agree that there are many strong marriages outside of the Church of God among people who do not believe the gospel of the kingdom. In fact, strong marriages are not restricted to Christians. There are strong marriages among Muslims, Hindus and a plethora of other religions.

Perhaps what I should have said is those of us who are married and believe the gospel of the kingdom, should be so motivated by it, that we build marriages that are strikingly different than any other marriages. Marriage is the foundation of and is inextricably linked to the gospel.

With respect to mainstream Christianity, there is no doubt that many are motivated by the picture of Christ marrying the church. What's different is the symbolism doesn't go any further. In heaven, this symbolism doesn't drive anything. Understanding the gospel (that Christ is coming to earth, to

reign on the earth with His bride) is completely different. The kingdom is active. Christ is going to become a father (Isa 9:6). His wife is going to actively work by His side raising children. (Isa 30:21) The kingdom of God will be structured, but it will not be a harsh, static, military or corporate structure. It will be an organic, dynamic family structure.

The lessons we are learning in marriage as one human mind joins another human mind and the two become one are vital to our functioning in the kingdom. We will be spirit beings, but we will still have independent minds. We will need to become one with Christ. Lucifer was one with Christ, but then, with his independent thinking, he separated himself from Christ and betrayed Him. Marriage is a learning and developmental institution. It is also a test and examination. Christ and the Father are scrutinizing us. In our roles as husbands and wives, we are clearly demonstrating our willingness and ability to “put on Christ”. The instructions for putting on Christ are clearly laid out for us in 1 Peter 3:1-7. Notice that after these instructions, Peter instructs us to be of one mind:

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:” 1Pet 3:8

Marriage is one institution where we learn to be of one mind with another. The church is the other institution where we learn this. It’s interesting to note that in Ephesians, before Paul gives instructions to husbands and wives, he tells the church to submit themselves to one another.

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Eph 5:21

And, as noted earlier, in 1 Peter, after giving instructions to husbands and wives, Peter tells the church to be of one mind. Clearly, there’s a link between learning to put on Christ in our marriages and learning to put on Christ in our church relationships. The congregation is an extension of the family. It is the household of God and in it we must learn how to conduct ourselves as family members.

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” 1John 4:20

It is hard for one to picture what one will do in heaven. Consequently, it is hard to be motivated by the vision of being in heaven. In the kingdom of God, beginning with the millennial rule of Christ, we will be active.

Initially, our focus will be on the fall harvest and bringing the rest of humanity to be “born again” into God’s family. Then comes the Last Great Day when the rest of the dead will be brought to life and collectively with Christ and the Father, we will all work diligently to bring them into God’s family. Then the Father will come down to earth and establish His throne here! (Rev 21:3) Then we will learn what’s next! How different this is from believing we go to heaven. And how motivating!

It is a grand vision and it is a reality. Working with independent, thinking minds and building meaningful and trusting relationships with them will be our primary activity as members of God's family. It will be challenging to say the least! However, the detailed lessons we are learning in our marriages and our church relationships will carry over to the kingdom because they will have shaped our thinking and behaviour. These lessons are the price of admission. They are the foundation of all future learning.

We've got to get our marriages right! Let's not think for a minute that we can frustrate, disappoint and/or betray our spouses and still be in God's kingdom. God will not even listen to our prayers if we fail to embrace our spouses in the manner of Christ!

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." 1Pet 3:8

Marriage is not just a symbol. It is a spiritual reality. It is a God-level construct that has to do with the joining of independent minds. It is given to man whom God made in His image to learn how to think and engage like God. Pride and selfishness are the biggest obstacles to marriage. They were Lucifer's downfall (Isa 14:13-14). The lessons of marriage and family equip us to be born into His family. When we are born in His family, we will then continue to learn how to be one with God and how to engage spiritual children.

What magnificent truth we have been exposed to! Let's help each other build the types of marriages God expects of us. In so doing, we bless not only ourselves and our spouses, but the whole world and future generations!

■ *Drew D*

While there are varying beliefs among mainstream Christianity, I know of very few of them who do not believe Jesus is coming back to rule on Earth. Orthodox Christianity teaches Jesus will return to set up His kingdom. The difference is in what happens to us between death and His return.

I fail to see how this difference causes mainstream Christianity to misunderstand what the marriage signifies.

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Thought Pieces > [Bin Laden WILL Walk This Earth Again](#)

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by [Pastor Adrian](#), May. 5, 2011



In a recent interview with Steve Kroft of 60 Minutes, that aired Sunday, May 8th at 7:00 PM, President Obama stated categorically that the White House will not be releasing the gruesome pictures of Osama bin Laden's corpse. In his effort to reassure Americans and the world that Osama bin Laden is in fact dead, the President said, "Osama bin Laden will not walk this earth again". This statement by the most powerful man on earth, though reassuring, isn't entirely accurate. Indeed, all peace-loving people in the

world breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing the news that Osama bin Laden is dead! However, an authority higher than the US President says bin Laden will walk this earth again.

By providing Osama bin Laden with an appropriate Muslim funeral and by not releasing the photos of his corpse, President Obama has demonstrated to the world that Americans are cut from a higher moral cloth than the terrorists.

America is fundamentally a Christian nation, and consequently, the Holy Bible is embedded in the foundational fabric of the nation. Unfortunately, most American Christians are unaware of what the Bible teaches on the subject of the fate of the dead. Most automatically assume that those who die in Christ go to Heaven and those who die in their sins are condemned to an ever-burning hell. But the Bible teaches no such thing.

The Bible teaches that the dead are... dead.

The Bible does not teach that the dead go to heaven or to hell. They are simply dead and waiting to be resurrected from the grave. There are, however, different resurrections. Those whom God has called out of the world and given his Holy Spirit will be in the first resurrection. Rev 20:5(b) says....This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.

The Second Resurrection

But what about persons like bin Laden who did not die in Christ? Does the Bible offer any hope to those who died in their sins? What about the victims of 9/11 who died in their sins? What about the billions of Muslims, Hindus, and others who have lived and died without knowing Christ as their personal saviour? Does the Bible condemn them to an ever-burning hell or will they have an opportunity for salvation?

Revelation 20:5 says “the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” Notice the clear statement in this passage that after the thousand years were over the people who come up in the second resurrection will LIVE AGAIN. But they will live again in a world where Satan will be locked away and cannot deceive the world any more (Revelation 20:1-4). There will be only one religion in the world and that is the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. During this time the word of God will be opened up to the nations of the world. Notice Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The first set of books here represent the books of the Bible and the second book contains the judgment record. The reason the dead are brought back to life is to know the truth of God and then be judged. The word of God in 2 Peter 3:9 says God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” And this is how it will happen.

God's Plan of Salvation

God is saving the world in a particular order. He is not saving everyone at the same time. 1 Cor 15:22-24 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits ; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. (NIV)

Firstfruits are those God calls first.

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

The term firstfruits suggests that these are not the only ones to be saved. Other fruits will follow.

God has predestined a few he wants to save now.

Rom 8: 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined , these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Osama bin Laden's Fate

Osama bin Laden falls into the category of those who will come up in the second resurrection and will be taught the truth of God. Christ died that the world through Him might be saved. Jesus was brutally murdered to pay for bin Laden's unspeakable sins. At the end of Christ's millennial rule, bin Laden will be resurrected back to physical life where he will walk the earth once again as a human being and learn the truth about God.

He will be taught from the Bible, not the Quran. He will be taught the way of peace. He will come to know how great the Messiah's sufferings were in order for him to gain salvation. He will then have a choice. He will either repent and accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour or he will be deemed incorrigible and will be sentenced to eternal death – the penalty of sin without repentance (Rom 6:29).

We pray the families of the victims of Osama bin Laden will gain some comfort and closure knowing this evil man and his evil schemes have finally come to an end. We also pray they will gain comfort in the plan of God knowing that they will see their loved ones again and that the day is coming when Osama bin Laden will face Jesus Christ. He will then have the opportunity to repent of his evil and to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

[Photo by Aman Deshmukh](#)

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Thank-you for posting this article, very well written. Great insight into God's plan of salvation for mankind.

What an awesome God we serve!

Selah.

-ZH

- [*Bro. Adrian*](#)

Thanks Zion! I agree. God is awesome! Hopefully, people who have been in anguish over loved ones that have died in their sins, will come to learn of God's plan and be filled with the hope of the resurrection.

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Thought Pieces > **Plurality of Elders**

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by Pastor Adrian, Oct. 30, 2011



Pastor Ramocan shared a great Bible Study with us yesterday! The subject was the plurality of elders in the Bible. The structure in most churches is to have one pastor manage a congregation and one man run an entire church. Pastor Ramocan, showed from the scriptures, how this is not the biblical model of church leadership.

This study will be posted on our site in the very near future. In the mean time, here's a quick summary:

The reasons for plurality of eldership:

- no one person has all the gifts needed to minister to a congregation. The church needs various gifts (teaching, counseling, administration, etc.) in order to function effectively.
- Christ runs the church. Having a single man at the top, forces brethren to look to a man rather than to Christ. With a plurality of eldership, no one elder has authority over the other. They are all under Christ and must learn to defer to one another in Christ-like humility.

The benefits of plural eldership:

- power is not concentrated in one person.
- they complement each other.
- they are accountable to each other.
- they share the many burdens of eldership with each other
- they provide multiple examples for the flock.
- the exercise of brotherly love and patience the elders have to exercise with each other helps them enter God's kingdom.

The drawbacks of plural eldership:

- personality conflicts can obstruct getting things done
- demands more patience, and love

What was most surprising to many, is the broad number of scriptures Pastor Ramocan was able to reference in support of a plurality of elders. These scriptures showed that within one congregation, multiple elders were at work. Among these scriptures, Pastor Ramocan referenced:

*Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them **elders** in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

*Titus 1:5 ¶ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee:*

*James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the **elders** of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

*1Pet. 5:1 ¶ The **elders** which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

I think if anyone is open to God's word, they will have to admit that the scriptures clearly come down on the side of plurality of eldership and not "one man rule" as many promote.

What do you think?

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- *Rebecca*

Yes, so sad that people are unwilling to work together and build on each others talents. The end result of a person at the top insisting people follow him is that those people are often led away from their covenant relationship with God and fleeced by their "shepherd"

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by [Pastor Ramocan](#), Sep. 14, 2011



Brethren, as we approach the Fall festivals and make preparations to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, we are reminded in Deuteronomy 14:26 that the two primary reasons for going to the feast are “that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always” and “that you and your household may rejoice.”.

In these challenging times when fear and anger are growing due to financial stress from the loss of jobs and failed investments, when acts of terrorism and wars fill our television screens, when diseases are on the increase, and when marriage and family are under threat, we have reason to rejoice in the coming Kingdom of God portrayed by the Feast of Tabernacles. Satan and his demon hosts will be destroyed forever and soon we will be rulers of the world with Christ in the Kingdom of God.

In Leviticus 23:41-43 God commands us to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. He says:*41 You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days.*

Temporary Dwellers

God made Israel live in booths for forty years in their wilderness journey to teach them and us valuable lessons about how to live our lives as sojourners on this earth. These lessons are portrayed in keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. A booth is a tent, a temporary dwelling – unlike a permanent home made of brick that has a permanent foundation. It can be folded up and taken to another location— taken because the person who owns it is on the move.

Having received the Spirit of God and a part of God's spiritual purpose, we have to understand ourselves as temporary dwellers on the earth. Even though we do not live in a tent that we can fold up and carry to another location, we are to understand that we are temporary dwellers on the earth. We are a people on the move toward the Kingdom of God which is the reign of Christ, the Millennium, and the permanent dwelling of God that is going to begin when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His government.

Christ came to the earth and tabernacled among us as a human being and He had to deal with life the same way we do. He had the same time and space constraints as we do. He had all of the experiences we go through. He was subject to the futility of this world. He was subject to decisions made by others. He was subject to persecution. He was subject to pain. He got tired. He was treated unfairly by the court system. His life was taken away as a result of it. When He was on the stake, He suffered pain unjustly. He had to deal with the same challenges we do! He was surrounded by sin despite His righteousness. He was subject to the futility, vanity, and meaningless of this world. But what did He do? He rose above it because He believed what Romans 8:28 tells us: *“all things work together for good to them that love the Lord and are the called according to His purpose.”*

Major Purpose

Do not lose sight of a major reason why we are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. It has to do with this pilgrimage and endurance. It has to do with the suffering that we go through on the pilgrimage on the way to the permanent dwelling of God while we are living in this temporary world! Romans 8:18 says *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Let us consider this eternal hope of our calling as we approach the fall festivals and prepare to go to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Photo by [harold.lloyd](#)

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by Pastor Ramocan, Jun. 12, 2011



As we draw near to the Feast of Pentecost, we are reminded that God calls us into His Church to become rulers with Christ in His kingdom (Rev 5:10; 20:6). The scriptures warn us, however, that not everyone who is called will qualify for rulership in God's Kingdom (Matt 20:16). Why is this?

God's requires that we first learn to rule ourselves before He gives us rulership over others! He says in Luke 6:10 "*whoever is faithful in the least will also be faithful in much*"

This means, God uses the little things we do to judge whether we can qualify to rule in His kingdom. This includes

- How we treat our spouse, children, or friends.
- Do we carefully think through what we say?
- Do we keep our word?
- Are we short-tempered, hard to get along with, stubborn, and uncooperative unless things are done our way?
- Are we quick to judge, impatient, malicious, foul-mouthed, or rebellious?
- Do we make promises and break them?

Proverbs 16:32 says:

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." *Ruling our spirit means ruling our moods, our habits, our passions and our bodies to defeat the temptations of adultery, fornication, idolatry, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, revelries, and the like; ... because the Bible says those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

As we go forward into the Feast of Pentecost, let us be reminded that God wants us to exercise the power of His Spirit over our feelings when we are hurt by others. He says through the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 4:12-13 "*When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things*".

Possessing the Spirit of God means we are empowered to be strong in the face of trials and to model the power of Christ to those who are spiritually weak.

Romans 15:1 says :

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

We must bear the pains and failings of those who do not live up to the standard to which Christ calls us. You can never go wrong doing the will of God. The evil done against you will not go unpunished if not repented of. God is your strength and He fights the battles of the righteous. He will in due course punish your enemies. You are not allowed to punish them yourself. You must leave room for God's wrath. He says in Romans 12: 19:

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: **"It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"** says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

In these final days of the count to Pentecost, let's reflect on how well we are ruling ourselves and then let's keep the Feast!

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Thought Pieces > **Rogue Models or Role Models?**

Search for:

by **Pastor Adrian**, May. 29, 2011



We've recently had a number of "men behaving badly" incidents. These include:

- French junior minister Georges Tron has resigned after being accused of sexually harassing staff at the town hall where he is mayor
- Dominique Strauss-Kahn attempted to rape a chamber maid in a swanky New York hotel;

- 63-year-old former California governor and action star Arnold Schwarzenegger split from his wife of 25 years after it was disclosed that he fathered a now 13-year-old boy with the family's former housekeeper Mildred 'Patty' Baena.
- 24 year old Sammy Wanjiru, a record-shattering Kenyan marathon runner and reigning Olympic champion, died May 15 in Nyahururu, a town about 115 miles north of Nairobi after jumping from the second story of his home when his wife found him in bed with another woman.
- Italy's Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, faces three years in prison if found guilty of paying minors for sex, and from six to twelve years for abuse of power.

What is particularly troubling about these incidents is all of these men were in positions of power, respect and trust and they used their positions to satisfy their own lusts at the expense of others.

The Christian Calling

As Christians, these stories should deeply concern us. We are all in training for positions of power:

Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Rev. 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Christ will not give these exalted positions of power to people who will abuse them. When his disciples were inquiring about who among them would be greatest, Christ made it clear what He was looking for in His future leaders and how we must be completely different from the leaders in society today:

But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:40-45)

Preparing for Leadership

Yesterday, in his sermon on Preparing for Leadership, Pastor Ramocan made it clear to us that one of the key areas we must be growing in is learning to rule over our spirit. We must get control over our emotions, impulses, and desires. When we have self-control, we will be able to continually sacrifice

ourselves for the good of others. When we rule our spirit, we will be able to look after the needs of others instead of using others to gratify our needs.

This message dove-tailed with the Bible Study that was given yesterday morning by Deacon Smith. In this study, Deacon Smith recounted the many examples of Christian martyrs. These men and women had such commitment and self-control that they chose to suffer ignominious deaths rather than recant their faith. If these Christians were self-absorbed and concerned with their own pleasures, they would not be our exemplars nor would they be in God's coming kingdom. If we are self-absorbed and we don't learn to "kill" our old man, we will not be exemplars for others nor will we be in God's coming kingdom.

Rom. 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

A new world is coming. Jesus Christ will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We will be the kings and lords under Him. No longer will people be abused by those in authority over them. Finally, the world will have leaders who will be true role models.

Jer. 23:4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

Photo by [Steve Juvetson](#)

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Thought Pieces > Sabbath Preparation

Search for:

by Bro. Zion, Apr. 6, 2012



The quality of an occasion and the success of it, is often determined by the amount of preparation that goes into it. A perfect example would be an athlete with aspirations to win a gold medal at the Olympics. It would be rather obtuse for an athlete to expect to win a competition without having adequate preparations. Such is the case with Christians who aspire to have a productive, spirit-filled Sabbath, by keeping it holy as we have been commanded to (Exodus 20:8).

In the manna narratives of Exodus the Israelites were instructed by God that they must prepare in advance for the Sabbath Day (Ex. 16:4-5, 25-30). They were given a double portion of manna on the sixth day, known as the “Preparation Day” so that they would have enough food for the Sabbath. Of course they were forbidden from doing their regular activities on the Sabbath Day (Deuteronomy 5:12-15), thus the Lord instructed them to prepare in advance for His holy and sanctified day.

Likewise, Sabbath observing Christians today need to take heed and ensure that we also adequately prepare for the Sabbath Day. Because of the fast-paced world that we now live in, I would highly recommend the use of a “Sabbath Preparation Checklist”; a list outlining the tasks that we should complete prior to sunset on a Friday evening. Some of these tasks may include: Ensuring that all the laundry is done, enough gas is in the car, the dishes are washed, you have all the groceries that you need, and of course the preparation of your main Sabbath meal.

We don’t need to wait until Friday to do everything, Sabbath preparation should start early to mid-week. We need to take the Lord’s Sabbath more seriously and part of taking it seriously is the time and effort we take in preparing for it. And not just the physical preparation, but also spiritual. We should have a wind down period before Friday’s sunset, where we are in a place of peace, reflection and prayer leading up to the Sabbath.

We have an instruction from God to prepare for His Sabbath. Part of Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy which is the fourth Commandment (Deut. 5:12-15), is properly preparing for it. If we don’t properly prepare for it, it can potentially cause us to do things on the Sabbath day that we ought not to do.

Here’s a question for prayerful consideration: What can I do to better prepare for the Sabbath Day?

The famous Benjamin Franklin once quoted “By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” Let us as God’s children, prepare to succeed. Let us be obedient to the fourth Commandment, by keeping the Sabbath Day Holy which starts with the Preparation Day

God Bless you.

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Thought Pieces > Take Heed

Search for:

by Bro. Shey, Mar. 31, 2012



The story of Job is a very inspiring, yet frightening one. I used to ask myself, how is it that a man could be so faithful? But also, why did God allow this to happen to him?

In the story of Job, God orders a hedge be put around Job's life. We see this in Job 2:6:

*And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but **save** his life. (Job 2:6 KJV) [emphasis mine]*

The word *save* is the Hebrew word **shamar**, which means to guard, protect, or to hedge about (Strong's Concordance). A hedge serves many purposes – but the most obvious one is for protection. But why, even with this hedge of protection, did Job lose his wealth and possessions, his family, and his health?

We find out later on in the book from a young man named Elihu:

And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. (Job 36:7-13)

You see, a hedge not only protects us from outsiders, it also blocks the view on the inside, allowing us to focus on ourselves. I believe God wants us to see the faults in our character and to repent. He already knows what's in our hearts, but we are often blind to our own faults.

Where did Job go wrong?

I think we can find Job's problem right at the beginning of the chapter (Job 1:1-5). Here we see an account of his 7 sons and 3 daughters, whom are feasting. On a regular basis, Job offers sacrifices for them because as he says "they may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts". But do we see Job asking forgiveness for his own sins? Even the sins he may not be aware of?

Let's contrast this to Nehemiah's attitude in Nehemiah 1:5-6. He asks forgiveness not only for the sins of Israel but also for his own sins:

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven. And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. (Nehemiah 1:4-6)

But if it wasn't what Job said or didn't say that caused him to sin (Job 2:10), what was it?

Throughout his trial, while his friends were trying to open his eyes, Job refused to acknowledge his own faults. Instead, he resorts to self-pity:

Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! (Job 6:2 KJV)

Discarding the advice of his friends, he basically tells them: 'Yeah yeah I've heard it all before. Who are you to be telling me anything? You don't know more than me!' (Job 12-14,16) and spends all of chapter 24 talking about how evil everyone else is.

Job is stubborn and still unchanging:

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. (Job 13:15 KJV)

Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. (Job 13:18 KJV)

Job didn't realize that there was a hedge around him because he only wanted it for the purpose of safety and protection.

*Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved [shamar] me;
(Job 29:2 KJV, emphasis mine)*

We too could be doing all kinds of righteous things like Job in chapter 29 but is that all God really wants?

Elihu then says something profound.

Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction. (Job 36:21)

He tells Job to not choose vain self-pity (*iniquity: Hebrew – 'awven – exerting yourself in vain; – different from 'evel – unrighteousness, wrong doing*) because Job was not having true misery or depression.

It is important to note that "Take heed" is the same Hebrew word *shamar*. It is telling us to do *more* than just listen up.

It is telling us to put up our own hedges and take a look at ourselves.

God wants true self-examination

Elihu finally tells Job the proper attitude to have:

*Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.
(Job 34:31, 32 KJV)*

Job's situation is still a contemporary one. We live in an individualistic society where it's all about *me*, *me*, *me*, how great *I* am, how comfortable *I* am, all the great things *I* do, and about how low *you* are, and what things *you* are doing wrong.

This is why we need God's hedging: it forces us to take look at ourselves and what *we* need to be doing better instead of pointing out the faults of others. Christ says to take the log out of our own eye *before* pointing out the speck in others (Luke 6:41).

Even when we feel we are in the right, even if we *are* in the right, as Christians we need to examine ourselves first—lest self-righteousness and self-pity set in. We need to self-examine at the point of attack.

Conclusion

Adam was responsible for working in the garden and hedging the garden, keeping it safe (Gen. 2:15). Instead, the serpent slipped in and turned away Adam's focus from working in the Garden. The result was that God had to *shamar* the garden from Adam.

If we fail to examine ourselves and protect against outside influences, we will find ourselves on the outside looking in.

Tips for self-examination this Passover season

- Exalt others before yourself
- Check your pride at the door
- Always consider your own sin first before accusing anyone else
- Ask, what did I do wrong or could have done better?
- Listen to and consider correction and chastisement

What are your tips for self-examination? How do you self-examine at the point of attack?

Photo by [Ben Clinch](#)

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Thought Pieces > Taking Spiritual Advantage of the Economic Recession

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by Pastor Ramocan, Jul. 12, 2011



Without a doubt, the world economic recession over the last two years has taken a serious toll on the lives of individuals, families and society. While we welcome the news that the recession is now behind us, this news is more of an economist's perspective than the real life experiences of ordinary individuals who are still without jobs, and who are living on reduced incomes and facing accumulated bills among many other issues. The people of God are not immune to the effects of economic recession and very often our physical hardships negatively impact our faith in ways that trigger dismay and depression.

When hard times come, your faith in God is a sure way to survive and overcome the most difficult circumstances. In times of trouble, we must be reminded of our self-worth and personal value, even when we lose our physical wealth and possessions.

The culture of our modern age has taught us that our personal value is dependent on the value of the things that we own; consequently, as our possessions and purchasing power decrease in value, we lose our self-worth. The Bible however, provides us with a distinctly different view of our self-worth. Jesus said in *Luke 12:15* "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." The point here is that our possessions do not define who we are. Our possessions, or desire for possessions, should not determine how we live our lives. Our belief and hope in the promises of Christ should determine how we live our lives. Eternal life and eternal wealth are the preoccupation of believers in Christ. This by far outweighs and outlasts anything we have now or will ever acquire in this physical world.

If our "life does not consist in the abundance of our earthly possessions," then it does not matter how much or how little we have. Our worth in Christ is all that matters.

God knows that in our temporal state we need food and shelter. He assures us in *Matt 6:25-34* "do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so

clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Jesus points out in this passage that worrying doesn’t do us any good. It won’t extend our lives, put a roof over our heads or fill the cupboards with food. Jesus said rather than worrying “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Making the Kingdom of God our priority is the cure to the effects of the economic recession. Our faith in God causes us to seek Him and rely on Him for everything we need. God is able to give us all that we need. Even in the midst of a global recession, Christians can live powerfully and joyfully by placing their faith in the promises of God and His coming Kingdom.

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Outreach > The Abomination of Desolation

Search for:

by Pastor Smith, May. 13, 2013



Around the year 167 BCE, the ruler of the Seleucid Empire, Antiochus Epiphanes, committed a terrible and horrendous act. It was not that he didn't commit many atrocities in his eleven year rule of the empire, but this one was different – very different. This one was sacrilegious; it was against the Most High God.

Antiochus, also known as Antiochus IV, and son of King Antiochus III, the Great, set up an altar to the Greek god Zeus, in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and sacrificed a pig on it. Yes, an unclean animal. In 168 BCE, King Antiochus, after several victories in Egypt, returned to his land with many riches. Undoubtedly, he felt like an invincible leader. He had his eyes on Jerusalem where the Second Temple, built by Cyrus the Great around 349 BCE, was still standing.

The Book of the Maccabees tells us: “When the soldiers entered Jerusalem, their commander spoke to the people, offering them terms of peace and completely deceiving them. Then he suddenly launched a fierce attack on the city, dealing it a major blow and killing many of the people. He plundered the city, set it on fire, and tore down its buildings and walls.” It continues: “Pagan sacrifices were offered in front of houses and in the streets. Any books of the law which were found were torn up and burned, and anyone who was caught with a copy of the sacred books or who obeyed the law was put to death by order of the king. Month after month these wicked people used their power against the Israelites caught in the towns.

On the twenty-fifth of the month, these same evil people offered sacrifices on the pagan altar erected on top of the altar in the temple.” This was an abominable act against the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Interestingly, King Antiochus had no idea that he was fulfilling a significant and important part of the prophecy by the Jewish prophet Daniel who wrote in Chapter 11:31 of his Old Testament book, “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation (or the abomination that makes desolate).” There's hardly any doubt in theological circles that Antiochus fulfilled this prophecy. His abominable acts also paved the way for the ultimate destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, in 70 AD, when the Roman military leader Titus brought in his army and destroyed the city – yet fulfilling another prophecy. When Jesus Christ was giving a warning about his return to earth in his second coming, in Matt. 24, he alluded to Daniel's prophecy, and how it would lead into the Great Tribulation.

From all indications, Daniel's prophecy is dual, and a forerunner to another abomination of desolation, shortly before his Second Coming. “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him, understand)... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...” (Matt. 24:15). For this prophecy to fulfill its duality, there has to be a third temple in Jerusalem – there isn't any at the moment. Likewise, an altar would have to be rebuilt and sacrifices would have to be re-instituted. As you read this article, there are a number of Jewish movements in Jerusalem that have been making attempts to erect a third temple. These are not Christian movements, and their intention is not to fulfill Daniel's as well as Jesus' prophecy. In fact, they don't even believe or accept them, yet they are adamant that a third temple has to be rebuilt in order for them to truly worship YHWH.

Brethren, we are living in interesting as well as intriguing times. On May 25 in Toronto, we will look at this prophetic scenario known as The Abomination of Desolation.

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- *Mrs.Saundra Vicks*

Thank you, Pastor Smith,

I am so looking forward to your message! God has truly blessed you and this church with His wonderful truth, and has blessed me in being able to hear it!!

- *Horane Smith*

Many thanks for your encouraging words. Indeed, God's word will always stand, and we should always proclaim in spirit and in truth. May God continue to guide you all the days of your life.

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by [Pastor Adrian](#), Feb. 8, 2011



Personal Evangelism

As we gear up to launch our spring evangelism campaign, I can't help but ponder how different my experience in the Church of God, International is compared to previous churches of God that I associated with. In the past, the emphasis was always on the ministry doing the teaching and evangelism taking place through television and publications. Consequently, the notion of personal evangelism was, initially, uncomfortable.

Our pastor recently took the time in a [Bible Study](#) to walk us through the scriptures that show that personal evangelism is required of every Christian. It's not an option, it's an obligation.

How CGI is Different

That got me thinking about how different this congregation is to other congregations I've associated with. Here, it is made abundantly clear to us that if we have the Holy Spirit, we also have gifts of the Spirit. And we are expected to contribute to the body with those gifts. When I was young in the faith, I was taught that only the ministry have gifts of the Spirit. This teaching runs contrary to the scriptures. God's people should be an empowered people, led by His Holy Spirit. We should acknowledge the Spirit in one another and highly esteem one another for the unique contribution we all make to the effective functioning of the body. The ministry should be helpers of our joy. They should interact with God's people from a perspective of deep honour for those who have been purchased with Christ's blood. They should never seek to dominate God's people or disenfranchise God's people.

Ministry Makes the Difference

I feel truly blessed to be in an organization that has a ministry that understands that God's church is not the organization. It is a spiritual organism made up of individuals who are led by God's Spirit. And that the ministry are not lords over God's people, but servants. This is such a profound realization that most of God's people really don't understand it. It needs to be experienced to be fully understood. CGI may be one of the few churches of God that gets this. Consequently, I have no reservations inviting friends and family to participate in an organization that aims only to help and never to dominate and disenfranchise.

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- *George*

Eph.4:11-12 And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul also taught in this verse that one of the roles of a pastor or teacher is to perfect or equip the saints. Therefore, I agree with you that the saints are equipped to evangelize and that pastors should be facilitating this goal. Bro.George

- [Bro. Adrian](#)

Hi George,

Thanks for your comment. I think we have a much healthier perspective when we view ALL members as having the gifts of the spirit and being empowered to do God's work, rather than the view that ONLY the ministry have gifts of the spirit. God's Church should be empowered not weak and feeble. I think those who promote the notion of a powerful ministry and a weak body are not in the will of God.

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Thought Pieces > The Humility Test

Search for:

by Pastor Adrian, Feb. 16, 2011



In a recent sermon by Bro. Jan, he made the statement that as a culture, our perspective on who should be revered is influenced by Hollywood. Those individuals that walk with a swagger, have a proud look and boast about how great they are, are the ones who become famous. Those individuals that work in the background, never seeking attention are ignored. Yet, Jesus Christ says it is these individuals that he will exalt (Matt 18:4).

I found it refreshing, therefore, to see a news article this week by Bob Greene where he openly praised the value of humility. The article was about 4-Star General Peter Chiarelli, the number 2 ranking general in the US Army. This is an exalted position which one addresses with deference. General Chiarelli attended a Washington dinner in full uniform. Unfortunately, the stripe in his trousers looked just like the stripe in the waiter's trousers. As General Chiarelli approached his table to be seated, White House Advisor Valerie Jarrett saw him approach from behind her. Seeing his trousers, she assumed he was the waiter and summoned him to get her a glass of wine. This could have been a most embarrassing and catastrophic moment for Ms. Jarrett. She was "mortified when she realized her mistake." It could have been catastrophic, but it wasn't.

It wasn't because of the way General Chiarelli responded. What did he do? What did he say? He said nothing. He simply and humbly poured her a glass of wine. Bob Greene says, "With his lofty rank in the military, he could have given Jarrett the deep freeze, reproached her and corrected her." (read Greene's entire article [here](#).)

I wonder how many of us are able to practise this level of humility. I think the natural human reaction when we are insulted is, "Do you know who I am?" Christ made himself of no reputation. As Christians, we need to learn to do the same. The scripture says, "let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Our society is losing civility and manners. I think we, as Christians, should go out of our way to be civil and courteous to everyone. Cantankerous behaviour is uncalled for in the church of God. When we fall short, we should be quick to apologize.

What do you think?

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by Pastor Smith, Feb. 20, 2013



As we draw nearer to the season of Passover, we often focus on the mission and accomplishment of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when he died for the sins of humanity. The Jesus of the Bible bled and died on Golgotha, outside Jerusalem, the Messiah Christians accept and adore as God incarnate, the Son of God who came to die for the sins of humanity.

That same Jesus came to fulfill what was predicted thousands of years before that Shiloh would come to ultimately save humanity from eternal death. He was and is the promised Messiah, the Christ, according to the Holy Bible, but what about Jesus, the Christ, outside of the bible? Did he ever exist and, if so, can he be proven historically to have lived on this planet?

Apart from their faith, what proof can Christians show that the historical Jesus truly walked the dusty streets of Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God, healing the sick, raising the dead, predicting his own death, rising from the dead and urging men to repent of their sins, accept him as Lord and Saviour, and be baptized in order to receive his glorious salvation? Surely, we can turn to the Bible because Christians accept it as the inerrant Word of God, but for non-Christians, historians, and theologians, the Holy Bible is not regarded as a historical and reliable document. In fact, some dismissed it as pure fiction.

From a secular perspective then, can Christians truly look outside of the Holy Bible to furnish such proof? We should, however, is there any extra-biblical evidence for his existence? Some biblical scholars will tell you there's no trustworthy evidence, and even if any exists, they cannot be regarded as historical facts; often times, they are forgeries, heresy, or manipulative evidence coerced by apologists and proselytizers of the faith. What about biblical archeology? Has it been able to shed any light or offer any proof that the historical Jesus Christ ever existed?

These probing and on-going questions have lent considerable energy to the debate about the historical Jesus. The many questions have given skeptics, scholars and historians ammunition to prolong the debate with no sign of it ever coming to an end anytime soon.

Christians are a people of faith, Christianity a religion of faith. For them, they don't need artifacts, archeological evidence or the pen of a secular historian to prove the existence and reality of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, shouldn't Christians be scared or hesitant to examine the abundance of evidence for and against the Jesus of history? One way or the other, the findings can only boost their faith in the Jesus of Nazareth; if we can't prove He existed we just have to rely on our faith and relationship with Him, and if we can prove there's evidence, it can only strengthen our resolve and belief in Him. In essence we have nothing to lose. Our monthly bible study tackles the subject of the historical Jesus on February 23, roughly a month before we come before the throne of grace to observe the Passover, His ultimate sacrifice, for you and me, and yes, for the theologians, the historians and the skeptics who doubt he ever lived.

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Thought Pieces > **Try the Spirits**

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by Pastor Adrian, Jul. 14, 2011



In my most recent sermon, [As the Spirit Gives Utterance](#), I established an irrefutable link between the modern day Pentecostal movement and ancient African Voodoo. I did a significant amount of research on this topic and needed to present the research to make the link clear. In the interest of time, I ended up cutting some scriptures at the end of my sermon. I'd like to present them here.

First, many believe the CGI Toronto congregation is or is becoming Pentecostal. What they are referring to when they say this is the emotional expression they see in our congregation. We can see from the scriptures, however, that genuine emotional expression is perfectly acceptable to God:

*Neh. 8:6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, **Amen, Amen**, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*

*1Kings 1:40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with **great joy**, so that the earth **rent** with the sound of them.*

Referring to the genuine expression of emotion as Pentecostal is based on ignorance of what Pentecostalism is. In my [sermon](#), I defined Pentecostalism, and then I explored its history and its origin. It is abundantly clear that Pentecostalism traces its path from Benin, Africa to 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles and from Azusa Street to the rest of the world. When the French exported slaves from Africa, they transported them to sugar plantations in French-owned Louisiana (Louisiana had not yet been sold to America). Unwittingly, they also transported the Voodoo religion.

Warning Against Sorcerers

In the Fon language, Voodoo means “spirits”. Voodoo is a religion where the practitioners develop a relationship with a hierarchy of spirits. They allow these spirits to possess them. Developing relationships with the spirit world is known in the Bible as sorcery. God continually warns His people to beware of sorcery. Sorcery is an ancient and powerful religion. It cascaded down from Egypt into west

Africa and from west Africa, through the institution of slavery, throughout the world. The Bible often translates the word for sorcery into the phrase “familiar spirits”.

*Lev. 19:31 Regard not them that have **familiar spirits**, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.*

*Lev. 20:6 And the soul that turneth after such as have **familiar spirits**, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.*

The Easton Bible dictionary says the Hebrews called sorcerers “obs”, which means leathern bottles. Sorcerers were considered by the Hebrews as vessels containing demons.

It is ironic that in seeking Christian perfection, Pentecostals seek the very thing that pollutes them before God:

Deut. 18:9 ¶ When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

Deut. 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Deut. 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deut. 18:12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Deut. 18:13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

Spiritual Discernment

Seeing spiritual power overtaking someone bewitches many in the Pentecostal movement. The Bible warns us to be more discerning.

1John 4:1 ¶ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

1John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Not all spiritual activity is of God. There are false prophets and evil spirits. The scripture teaches us to discern spirits through what the spirit confesses. When Pentecostals “catch the Holy Ghost” and tremble and convulse and bark and engage in inarticulate vocalizations, how are they confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh? When we observe the Feast of Pentecost, we are confessing that Christ is come in the flesh. We have to calculate the day of Pentecost from the Wave Sheaf Offering. The Wave Sheaf Offering pictures Christ’s successful sacrifice. When we observe the Feast of Pentecost, we picture our birth into God’s family, our glorification and our marriage to Jesus Christ. We confess that God became man so that man can become God.

Not everyone will accept the truths of God.

1John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

This is how we discern the spirit of error (or deception). When the truth of God is presented, is it resisted or embraced? Sorcery focuses on personal experience. It bewitches people through their feelings. This is why we mustn’t use personal experience as the foundation of our faith but God’s truth. If we commit to personal experience, it will be easy for us to be deceived. This is as true today as it was in the time of the apostles:

Acts 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

Acts 8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

Acts 8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

Simon bewitched everyone because of what they experienced in his presence. The scripture says that *everyone* gave heed to him from the least to the greatest. They believed he was the great power of God.

This is the same reaction to the miraculous events that took place in 1906 at 312 Azusa Street. The spiritual forces at work were so powerful, people from all over America, from the least to the greatest, came to experience miracles of tongues and healings. What they experienced, however, was the spirit of sorcery not God's Holy Spirit.

Christian Perfection

Evidence of Christian perfection through the indwelling Holy Spirit is not the convulsions and inarticulate vocalizations as Pentecostals teach. Evidence of Christian the indwelling Holy Spirit is love:

1John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

1John 4:17 ¶ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

We have to be very careful not to be ensnared by the Pentecostal movement. It is the fastest growing denomination in Christianity. It boasts half a billion adherents and is adding thirteen million per year. The influence of Pentecostalism is everywhere. We must be on guard against allowing it to infiltrate our congregation. It is easy for us to see practices in Pentecostal churches and adopt them. We should exercise extreme caution when doing this.

Deut. 12:29 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

Deut. 12:30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

What is Central to the Church?

What differentiates God's church from false churches is not our personal, subjective experiences. Our foundation is truth. That's not to say that personal experience is unimportant. It is important. However, it is not the foundation. Those who use their personal experience as their foundation are easily deceived. Our foundation is truth. Notice in Acts 2 that the emphasis is on truth.

Acts 2:5 ¶ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Acts 2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

Acts 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

The miracle of languages was given to reverse what happened at the tower of Babel. At the tower of Babel, languages were given to separate men from each other and prevent them from working together. Here language was given to bring people together. Jews from all nations heard *the truth* in their own language. Consequently, they were convicted and converted. What did they continue in?

Acts 2:42 ¶ And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Doctrine is paramount. Doctrine influences everything. We behave the way we do because of what we believe to be true. As a result, God's church emphasizes doctrine. God educates. Satan deceives. Note the following scriptures, which emphasize doctrine:

Neh. 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

1Tim. 5:17 ¶ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

1Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

God's Spirit is a teaching spirit. We have much to learn and we have much righteousness to develop. The concept that by speaking in inarticulate vocalizations demonstrates that we have achieved Christian perfection is deception. We have a long way to go to achieve perfection. That is why God's Spirit emphasizes teaching.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Future Orientation

Those of us called into God's church have an awesome responsibility ahead of us. This is why the church is future oriented. We are in preparation mode. We must be constantly edified to achieve a state of perfection for our marriage to Christ. False teachers will try to get us to take our eyes off our future

and focus on the present. They will emphasize healing and relief from trials. Healing and relief from trials are wonderful, but they are not our focus. Our focus is marrying Christ and assisting Him in bringing the whole world to the knowledge of Him.

Rom. 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Sorcery in our Midst?

Whether we call it Voodoo, sorcery or Pentecostalism, God's people have always had to be on guard against people who interact with the spirit world. The biggest danger is when these people are in our midst. As the early church evangelized their Jewish brethren, sorcerers were present even among the Jews:

Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

Acts 13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Acts 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Acts 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

From the moment Adam was created and God breathed His Spirit into him, Satan sought spiritual control over him. Many have succumbed to Satan's demonic influence. This will continue until the end.

*Rev. 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, **and sorcerers**, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Sorcerers will always try to influence God's church. They will come in different disguises. We must be perceptive and recognize them in whatever form they come.

2Cor. 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2Cor. 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

2Cor. 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

We must be established in God's doctrine. We must understand that what is central to God's church is not healing or miracles but DOCTRINE! If we focus on healing and miracles, sorcerers will easily deceive us. We must focus on doctrine. We must realize the path to perfection is not in ecstatic experiences but in doctrine and the effectual work of God's word when we inwardly digest it. Finally, we must honour those God gives us as teachers for edification will come into the church through those who accurately expound God's word.

Eph. 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph. 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph. 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Invitation to Discussion

What is your opinion on this topic? Have you had experience with the Pentecostal movement? Have you looked into the topic of speaking in tongues? Do you have questions? Let's talk.

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Thought Pieces > **We Are a Kind of Firstfruits?**

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by [Pastor Ramocan](#), May. 10, 2012



We have entered into the fourth week of the Feast of Weeks which begins and ends with a firstfruits harvest. Why are there two harvests with the same name, one at the beginning and one at the end of the Feast of Weeks? What do they represent? Is there more God wants us to understand about ourselves and His great plan of salvation through these feasts? You will be amazed to learn about the role of the saints as firstfruits.

In Lev 23:9, God instructed His people Israel to observe the Feast of the Firstfruits. He said to Moses in verse 10, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. (11a) He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ... 14 You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God.

Before Israel could eat any of their harvest, they had to give the first reaping (the firstfruits) to God. What was the significance of giving the firstfruits of the harvest to God? Notice, God required the firstfruits (which is the first reaping of the harvest) before the crop could be owned by the people. The people were prohibited to eat any portion of the crop before they handed over the first reaping to God. The firstfruits of the harvest was therefore the purchase price paid by the people to God for the harvest. So that by giving God the first fruits of their harvest Israel could now own the harvest. They could now eat all they wanted because the price was paid.

You know the value of an item can be measured by the price paid for it. Jesus Christ as firstfruits is the price God paid to purchase us. What a value God has placed upon the life of each of us! If only we knew our worth! Jesus said in Mark 8:36-37 36, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" The greatest tragedy of human existence is that man has not come to know his worth and his potential. We squander our time our energy and intellect pursuing the material things of this world not realizing that the whole universe combined is not worth a single one of us.

The apostle Paul who caught the vision of this worth God has placed on us said in Phil 3:8 ... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. He says in 1 Cor 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own ; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

The Firstfruits Guarantee the Harvest

1 Cor 15: 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Rom 11:16 tells us that the harvest attains to the status of the firstfruits "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches" Christ says in John 17:19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Why is There a Second Offering of Firstfruits?

The apostle James says in James 1:18 "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures".. Why are Christians called "a kind of firstfruits?" To understand this term let us go to Leviticus 23: 15 "'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. 16 Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17 From wherever you live,

bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD.

Notice, this is a second offering of firstfruits. The difference with this second set of firstfruits are:

1. It is offered fifty days after the first set of fruits
2. The bread is baked with leaven added
3. There are two loaves of bread instead of one
4. The harvest is wheat not barley as is the earlier harvest.

The clear explanation is this: Christians are imperfect firstfruits because we sin even though we strive to live upright Christian lives. We are therefore the firstfruits of an imperfect harvest – the harvest of the people who will come up in the second resurrection in their sins. This contrasts with Christ the firstfruits who was sinless when he was in the flesh. Christ, therefore, could not be the firstfruits of the second harvest because the second harvest is an imperfect harvest. We, on the other hand as imperfect firstfruits, represent the second harvest. At our resurrection, we will attain to the status of Christ. At their resurrection, the rest of humanity will attain to the status we as Christians now have. That is, they will have received their calling. Like us they will have to be taught and learn to live faithful, righteous lives through God's Spirit. Many will enter into God's Kingdom while others will refuse to obey God and will be condemned (Matt 25: 31-35).

As Firstfruits, We Become to the World What Christ is to the Church

James 1:18 "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" The second set of firstfruits guarantees the second harvest of humanity – that is, those who will come up in the second resurrection. What an honour God has bestowed on us! Christ is the firstfruits that guarantees the resurrection of the saints. The saints are the firstfruits that guarantee the resurrection of the rest of humanity.

The Role of the Firstfruits in the Millennium

The firstfruits of God's harvest, will come up in the first resurrection to reign with Christ on earth as kings and priests so many others can enter God's Kingdom (Revelation 5:10; 20:6). Jesus promised that "he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations" (Revelation 2:26). These nations over which the resurrected saints will rule are nations that are ignorant of God's truth, and will need to learn the truth about God for the first time. The firstfruits will work with Jesus Christ to bring the nations to God. God is depending on you! The world is depending on you! Let us be faithful to the end!

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Thought Pieces > [What Does Dying to the Law Mean?](#)

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by [Pastor Ramocan](#), Feb. 15, 2013



In Romans 7:4, the Apostle Paul says to the brethren in Rome: *“you also died to the law through the body of Christ that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.*

What does dying to the Law mean? Is it that Christians are not required to keep the Law? This is the view held by some. To answer this question, we must first understand that the term “Law” (from the Greek “*nomos*”) is used in different ways by the Apostle Paul. Each time we see the word Law in Paul’s writings we must look for the context in which he uses it. In his scholarly article “Paul and the Law” Samuel Bacchiocchi points out that Paul uses the word “law” to refer to: the Mosaic Law (Gal 4:21; Rom 7:22, 25; 1 Cor 9:9); the entire Old Testament (1 Cor 14:21; Rom 3:19, 21; the will of God written in the heart of Gentiles (Rom 2:14-15); the governing principle of conduct (works or faith—Rom 3:27); man’s evil inclinations (Rom 7:21); and the guidance of the Spirit (Rom 8:2).

For example, in Romans 7:23-25, Paul uses the word law in different ways. He says: *“But I see **another law in my members**, warring against **the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin** which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve **the law of God**, but with the flesh **the law of sin.**”* In this passage, Paul refers to the involuntary pulls of his carnal nature as “another law in my members” which he calls **the law of sin**. He then says this **law of sin** wars against **the law of his mind** – a reference to **the Law of God** written upon his mind.

In what sense did Paul use the word law in Romans 7:4 when he said “you died to the law?”

In Romans 7:1, Paul says: *“do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that **the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives**?”* Paul here uses the word Law in the sense he uses the word SIN in Romans 6:12 *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its*

evil desires.” The reign of sin in one’s body means sin has **dominion** over that person’s life so much so that the person “obeys its evil desires.” The term sin and law can be used interchangeably because “sin is the transgression of the Law.” The term “you died to the Law” means here “you died to the condemnation of the law.” Hence, the scriptures say in Romans 8:1, *“There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus.”* It is to the condemnation of the law that this verse refers and because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because we have “died to the law” because the law cannot condemn us as long as we are in Christ Jesus.

Illustration of Marriage

In verses 2-3 of Romans 7, Paul uses the illustration of marriage to depict our release from this dominion or condemnation of the Law. He says: *“For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives (Romans 7:2). But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.”*

The husband in this illustration represents our “old self” to which we are enslaved. In Rom 6:6-7, Paul says: *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin –because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”* Paul later refers to our sinful nature in Romans 7:23-25 as “the law of sin.” It is from this law of sin that we have been freed. The law of sin is man’s carnal nature, which transgresses the law of God. So vicious is this law, Paul says in Romans 8:7 *“The carnal mind does not love the law of God nor can it.”*

We sin when we transgress the Law of God. It is through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ that we are delivered from sin symbolized by our baptism. Through baptism we have put to death and buried the “old man.” When we put off the “old self” through baptism, we are freed from the condemnation of the Law. We have died to the Law. It is not the law that dies. It is our “old self” that has died.

Every Day Experience

Here is an illustration from our every-day experience that may help you to better understand how we have “died to the Law.” If a motorist driving on the road is stopped by the police and it is discovered that he is without his proper license and motor vehicle documents, the law has power over him. He can be ordered to park the vehicle; he can be taken into custody, brought before a judge and fined. In this case, he is under the dominion of the law. The judge, however, in his discretion may exercise mercy and free the driver from the penalty of the Law. The fact that the judge frees the driver does not mean the law is abolished. The driver would be warned that if he repeats the violation of the law he will be held in custody. So the judge tells him to go but warns him not to repeat this violation of the law. This is what Jesus meant when He said to the woman who was brought before him for adultery. The penalty was death, but after examining her case and her accusers, Jesus said to the woman “go and sin no more”. To spell it out, this is what Jesus said “Go, and transgress the law of God no more.” This is what Paul meant when he said in Romans 6:15, *“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”*

Contrast the above illustration with a second driver who is stopped by the police and on examination of his documents the police find them to be in order. The law has no power over this man. Dare the Police to cease his vehicle or take him in custody! This man is free from the law because he is not in violation of the law. Ironically, it is those who say the law has been abolished and transgress the laws of God (commonly His Sabbaths and Holy Days) who are under the condemnation of the Law. The law points out sin and if you transgress one you are guilty of all. Paul said “had it not been for the law I would not have known sin for if the law had not said “Thou shalt not covet” I would not have known what covetousness is.” Again, the scriptures say “where there is no law there is no sin.” How can preachers today say the law is abolished and at the same time say sin abounds in our world? If sin is in our world, then the law of God exists because “where there is no law there is no sin.”

Declared Righteous

The law does not deliver us from sin. It is Christ the righteous Judge alone who frees us from sin. But Christ requires us not to break his law. *“Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say?”* He said, *“If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”* Paul says in Rom 2:13, *“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”* Notice we are DECLARED righteous. This means even when we keep God’s Law, we are not righteous in and of ourselves. It is Christ who declares us righteous but the condition of being declared righteous includes the keeping of God’s Law. The law has power over you only when you break it. If you return to your former life of transgressing God’s law you are once again taken into custody by the law and you have not died to the law.

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Thought Pieces > What Was the Top News Story of 2011?

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by Bro. Shey, Jan. 6, 2012



During our last [Men's Christian Development Class](#), I had the privilege of moderating the Perspectives session of the class. During this session, we discuss a variety of issues, each giving our opinions and personal beliefs on the topics.

One of the questions I presented asked the men to discuss what they thought the top news story of 2011 was. So I thought I'd ask you: What do you think was the top news story of 2011?

Submit your answer via the poll below or if you disagree with the choices, just add a comment to this post.

[poll id="2"]

[Photo by Aman Deshmukh](#)

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- [*Bro. Adrian*](#)

Great question. I vote for the Arab Spring as I believe it is the beginning of a power shift in the Middle East. As much as we despise the dictatorships of the past, they did mitigate against the rise of fundamentalist Islam. We can anticipate much greater influence from Iran in the months and years ahead.

- *Jim*

Tough question ... reminds me of the psychology battle years ago over "Nature or Nurture", (Does your "heredity" have more influence, or the "environment" you grow up in?) ... It is a silly battle because they BOTH play a giant part! I selected the economy because of the concern over another collapse that might again paralyze the banking industry and leave banks and countries not trusting to lend... and keep the economy going... a lot of fear & greed "out there" blocking progress.

- [Bro. Smith](#)

You're right, our perspective on this will depend on the environment around us. Thanks for your comments!

- *Housb75*

Very good question. all are just about equal in importance.

My choice was the Japan Earthquake, first a 9.0 earthquake, one of the biggest ever. then this very nasty tsunami, then the human loss tragedy. it was not as big as the human loss in Haiti however. and then the nuclear power stations collapse which could have had a much greater impact upon Japan itself, but also the whole world.

- [Bro. Smith](#)

Great points, thanks for your thoughts on this.

- [jasminsmith](#)

Wow! This is a tough question. They were all such great news stories and they still have impact now in 2012. My initial inclination is to choose the Arab Spring or the Global Economy both have unleashed much global instability and insecurity. But if I must choose one, it would be the Arab Spring. Witnessing the dominance of these modern day totalitarian regimes is downright frightening. Also, the arrogance and complete disregard for human life by these dictators paired with the democratic nations doing nothing and falling back into a policy of appeasement will likely make the Arab Spring the top news story of 2012 as well.

- *Sis. Jas*

Wow! This is a tough question. They were all such great news stories and they still have impact now in 2012. My initial inclination is to choose the Arab Spring or the Global Economy both have unleashed much global instability and insecurity. But if I must choose one, it would be the Arab Spring. Witnessing the dominance of these modern day totalitarian regimes is downright

frightening. Also, the arrogance and complete disregard for human life by these dictators paired with the democratic nations doing nothing and falling back into a policy of appeasement will likely make the Arab Spring the top news story of 2012 as well.

- *Asha*

The Arab Spring was quite sudden and surprising and also exciting as we watch prophecy being fulfilled. The Japan Tsunami was huge and scary to watch and prophetic as we see earthquakes in various places happening.

- *Anonymous*

I picked the Arab Spring because it was the most dramatic change. The other events in the survey are significant, but they do not rise to the level of the changes in the Arab World. The economic issues have been with us for a number of years now. Major catastrophes like the Japanese earthquake occur on a regular basis. The killing of Bin Laden is not a big deal because he was only one man...his vision continues in his followers.

- [Bro. Smith](#)

Interesting thought. Thanks for commenting!

- *Little Hess*

Even though it was lightly reported – a small insert in the U.S.A. TODAY newspaper – the Vatican decision to begin discussions on the feasibility of moving their headquarters from Rome to Jerusalem in the future – have begun talks with Jewish leaders on the subject and secondly the joining of the Church of England (Anglican Church) to the Catholic Church in 2012. This is far more N.B. and far reaching with greater consequences than most worldly stories especially to GOD,S people. Gordon.

- [Bro. Smith](#)

I had not heard about that. Thanks for the comment

- *Ed Szalankiewicz*

I chose the global economy as I believe it will ultimately be the “trigger” of global turmoil. Each of the items you list as “nominees” are worthy for their degree of tragedy or geo-political impact. I doubt there is a correct answer. If the worlds food supply is negatively impacted at the same time we have economic melt-down “katie-bar-the-door”

Regards
“mr. ed”

▪ *Mroy48*

Arab spring! Who would have thought how an realignment of land area subject to a future king of the South could happen so quickly. Events still to transpire but add the unstable european economy and a Catholic Church trying to reassert itself and we can only imagine how things could arrange themselves for a major fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in our own lifetime.

▪ *ZION HEZEKIAH*

All of the above, and other top news stories of 2011 have economic ramifications to some degree, so I would have to vote for the global economy. And I agree with Mr. Ed when he says “it will ultimately be the trigger of global turmoil”. It will be interesting to see how things unfold economically in 2012, especially with this being an election year in the US.

-Hez

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Thought Pieces > [When He Shares His Broken Heart With You](#)

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by [Sis. Pauline](#), Jul. 11, 2014



Is it difficult to ever imagine that the Sovereign and living Creator will ever share His broken heart with you?

But He does. On many occasions He does so and even today. Why? Because He wants us to have an intimate relationship with Him He will share His broken heart with us. As children who have a close relationship with his/her parents do feel the pain and sorrows the parent(s) feel when experiencing any trials, persecutions, and hardships. The child also feels and experience the joys that parent experience.

There are many experiences documented throughout the Torah/Bible illustrating such intimacy He shares with us.

1. Genesis 15:12-16. Yahweh had to put Abram to sleep to show Him some of the sorrow He felt regarding the future suffering of Abram's descendants in Egypt. Had Abram was awake seeing all this sorrow he would not have been able to bear it. Yet even while asleep it was horrifying enough.
2. Exodus 3:7-22. Yahweh was sharing with Moses His broken heart for the descendants of Abram who were suffering greatly.

They are not just words that He said to Moses, giving a command. They were His actual feelings He shared with Moses. He sees the affliction. In Exodus 3:7 *"And the Lord said: 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows'."*

To know: The Hebrew word for- know is – YADA. To know intimately everything, every feelings, to share in sorrows and joy, to have deep empathy, compassion, deep feelings for another, to feel, to know every intricate details of another person, to know what pleases or distresses another.

3. Exodus 12:40-42. Yahweh here is fulfilling His promise to Abram He gave back In (Genesis 15-12-16) to deliver the children of Israel and all those who want to be included. *"The time the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. 41-. At the end of 430 years to the day, all the divisions of Yahweh left the land of Egypt. 42- This was a night when Yahweh kept vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt, and this same night continues to be a night when Yahweh keeps vigil for all the people of Israel through all their generations"*.

This He wants to always keep close to our hearts of how He delivered our ancestors from cruelties. *He kept vigil*, making sure whoever wanted to leave no one was left behind, even the bones of Joseph and His father were taken out, including their possessions. No demonic forces could stop Him, they all had to flee to make way for His children' escape.

4. Exodus 14. Yahweh had extreme compassion on Pharaoh in not killing him, then. He only wanted His children out of there (Egypt). While He kept vigil over His children, He also had His eyes of the rebellious ones – Egypt and Pharaoh.

It was not enough the plagues were sent as warning signs to Pharaoh to release the slaves, but now he wanted to totally annihilate them. Now Pharaoh is forcing Yahweh to do what He never intended to do. And there, out there in the Red Sea He brought complete judgment and punishment on Pharaoh.

5. Numbers 16 – 17. The rebellion of Korach, Dathan, and Eliab and their followers. They rebelled against Yahweh's authority – in His presence, creating insurgence, and close to mutiny against Yahweh and those He put in authority over them. Moses felt hurt because that was how Yahweh felt – hurt. Yahweh shared His hurt by causing Moses to be intimately aware of the deep disrespect they had exhibited against Him – the Most High who delivered them out of Egypt.

6. David and Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11-12. King David had acted presumptuously, took the wife of another man, killed the man and attempted to push the wife away out of sight.

2 Samuel 12, after much time had pass, David wrongly presumed that his sin was hidden but Yahweh was still feeling the pain of the great dishonor brought to Bathsheba, her husband Uriah, to Israel, David's own household, and to His kingdom. 2 Samuel 11:27(b) *'But Yahweh saw what David had done was evil, and it displeased Him'*.

Yahweh shared His broken heart with the prophet Nathan to relate to David His broken heart against David's sins. Yahweh's heart was broken, exceedingly, and He wanted David to feel it too. 2 Samuel 12:10 *"...because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife"*.

Punishment was pronounced upon David and his household and also was shown to him the after effects of his sin in how Israel as a nation will rebel against him.

To despise Him is to deliberately turn away from all His Principles to do our own thing. Because we are saying His principles do not apply to us.

When we see the consequences of sin all around us and Yada Yahweh, we feel what He feels, we share in His sorrows.

7. *Yeshua on the cross.* Matthew 27. It is inconceivable for any mortal soul to quite perceive the complete depth of losing a child to such intense death. Even if we had experienced it we cannot bear the full weight of that loss all at once, neither does He allow us to or it would break and destroy us completely. Here in this chapter 27: 46 *Yeshua said, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is- My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"* Yeshua was sharing His broken heart telling us the story of His suffering that was already prophesied and fully illustrated out in Psalm 22: ... vs 12-21..

Today, we feel the pain and horror of what is happening around us, and ponder, "How does Yahweh feels about all this". He already shared His pain with us throughout the entire Torah/Bible

In our own experiences of sorrows, pains, grief, we come to Yada our Creator on higher levels and deeper depths. The heart that does not know the true heart of Yahweh cannot perceive this nor wants to share in such intimacy and analyses out such understanding.

Proverbs 14: 10 – *The heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger does not share its joy.*

In our times of sorrow, meditation of His principles and consequences of sin, He shares His broken heart with us. As the human heart breaks for the sins of others, and for our own sins, He is sharing His broken heart with us.

When we sin, He entreats us with His words and with the power of His presence (Holy Spirit) we feel remorse for our sins and repent – He shared His broken heart with us allowing us to understand the gravity of our sins in feeling this remorse for our sins and repent. When we repent we are again in harmony with him – Yada – heart to heart relationship with the Creator.

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Featured > Why Does God Want Us to Observe the Holy Days?

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by Bro. Jan, Nov. 5, 2011



A few years back, my family decided to take a trip and visit my brother in the United States, who had just moved to a new location to a different city in the state of Pennsylvania. I asked for the address and used Google Maps to get the directions, printed them with exact step-by-step directions, and was ready to hit the road the next day. After 8 hours of driving we had reached our destination. We found the street, but couldn't find the house number. Thank God we ended up in the same city we wanted to go, but somehow ended up on the wrong side of it.

My friends, technology can fail you. Nothing is perfect in this world. But let me assure you that God's salvation map that is presented to us in His Word and in His annual Holy Days will never fail you. You will never miss the destination as long as you follow the map.

From the early beginning, Christianity has been called "The Way" (*way* means *road*) for a very good reason. Christianity has a *destination*, and the journey requires very careful *driving*. Jesus Christ will never agree with those who say that there are "many different roads to the same place."

Why does God want us to observe the Holy Days?

Because God loves us and He wants us to know about our future. The Holy Days help us comprehend the Great Master Plan — the very purpose of God — why we are here and where we are going from here and ultimately, how we can become His children.

From the first page of your Bible, since the creation, everything is revolving in cycles of seven. Every seventh day is a Sabbath day that commemorates our God as the only Creator, and points to the future rest in God's Kingdom at the end of time.

In Exodus 31:13 God says:

“You must observe my Sabbaths. This is my sign between me and you for the generation to come”.

But just as the weekly Sabbath is a “sign” between God and His people, so are the annual Holy Days. In Leviticus 23:2 God says “They are the “feasts of the LORD”— “my feasts,” says God.

God's annual Holy Days start in the first month of the Hebrew calendar and end in the seventh month. Altogether there are seven Holy Days that are pronounced Holy by our God. The biblical Holy Days fall during 3 seasons of the year. The early spring harvest, the late spring harvest, and the fall harvest in the land of biblical Israel. They portray God's spiritual harvest of humanity.

In Leviticus 23, we find a summary of these annual festivals. The first three, beginning with the [Passover](#) and [Unleavened Bread](#) and ending with the Feast of [Pentecost](#), are memorials of the first part of God's Master Plan. They picture the firstfruits of Christ's labours. The last four festivals, [Feast of Trumpets](#), [Day of Atonement](#), [Feast of Tabernacles](#) and the Last Great Day look forward to the future and show how and when God will reap the great harvest of people into His Family.

There are many Christians who claim that the Annual Holy Days are done away with and the only thing we need is God's Grace. But how can you fully comprehend God's Grace without His annual Holy Days?

I thank God for this great knowledge, what a blessing it is to my heart. Do you feel the same about the Holy Days?

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Hi Bro. Jan, thanks for your post! I love your comment, “But how can you fully comprehend God’s grace without His annual Holy Days?” This question is right on the mark! God’s grace is incredible! We underestimate it without a full understanding of His master plan – revealed in the Holy Days!

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by [Pastor Ramocan](#), Jan. 19, 2012



The Bible is clear about [how this present world will come to an end](#). God has laid down in his word specific prophetic events that must be fulfilled, prior to the second coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom on this earth and to bring an end to this world's man-made, Satan-directed system of rulership. Among the events to precede the coming of Christ are the revival of the Roman Empire (the Beast of Revelation 13:1-2 and Daniel 7:7; 23-24); the Abomination of Desolation (Matt 24:15), and the Great tribulation (Matt 24:21). It is impossible for all these events to occur in 2012. Why? – Because according to biblical prophecy the great tribulation alone will run for three and a half years (Daniel 7:25). Additionally, the Great Tribulation must precede the Abomination of Desolation and the revival of the Roman Empire is still in the making. So let us take a quick look at the first of these three events which is the revival of the Roman Empire.

Revival of the Roman Empire

Many are looking on at Europe and wondering “just what is happening here?” The EU appears to be dwindling away under a financial and economic crisis, casting an air of uncertainty about Europe's future. But Bible prophecy shows that despite the challenges Europe is now facing Europe will like the proverbial phoenix rise from its ashes to become the new economic and military super power of the world within this present generation.

The downturn we are witnessing in Europe can be likened to the pulling back of a hammer. When a hammer is pulled back, don't be mistaken, it is not retreating, it is gaining greater force to strike. Likewise, the apparent crumbling of certain states within the EU must not be mistaken to be a weakening of Europe. Instead, is the opening up of opportunities for Germany to exercise its influence and power to gain control over the EU. .

History records that for well over a thousand years Germany positioned itself as the centre-piece of European civilization. Dr. Herman Hoeh a leading scholar and author of *A Compendium of World History*, wrote in the *Plain Truth Magazine* of 1962:

The German Reich long endured as the oldest political institution in Europe; older than the government of France or England by centuries. The German people called their Reich the Holy Roman Empire. It bore rule over Europe for a thousand years. This Holy Roman Empire of the German people was officially designated by the Church in the Middle Ages as the Kingdom of God on earth. Its citizens, the Germans, felt themselves true Romans and bearers of the Christian Reich or Kingdom. They were therefore the chosen people of the Christian era, entrusted with a world-mission to be the protectors of Christianity.

Since coming to office, Pope Benedict xvi in a 144-page encyclical titled “Charity in Truth,” called for a “World Political Authority” and “A new world financial order. An Encyclical is the second highest ranking document issued by the Vatican. In his Encyclical, Pope Benedict proposes a “World Political Authority” to manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to bring about integral and timely disarmament; food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration, stating that “there is urgent need for a World Political Authority” Such a world political authority he says “would have the authority to ensure compliance with its decisions, from all parties” — meaning, all nations.

In analyzing the Pope's call for a “World Political Authority” one commentator ask:

Would the Vatican subject itself to a global political authority that has the power to make decisions and ensure that the Vatican complies with them? Surely the only “world political authority” under which Pope Benedict xvi would willingly and consistently function, would be one in which the Vatican had a controlling influence. And what significant group of nations do you think might be willing to subject itself to strong Catholic influence and papal authority? There's only one answer, really: Europe! That's why the Pope's call for the formation of new global regulatory bodies, and a new global political order, is so spot on with Bible prophecy.

The call by Pope Benedict XVI for a new global political authority is a further step toward the fulfillment of Bible prophecy concerning a New World Economic and Political System, under a Revived

Roman Empire. 2012 could be a significant year in bringing us closer to the formation of a Revived Roman Empire – the end-time beast of Revelation 13:1-2 and Daniel 7:7; 23-24..

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Search for:

by Sis. Pauline, Apr. 20, 2014



The Hebrew word *mishpatim* means *ordinances*.

Ordinances as we know them are: Commandments, Statutes, Testimonies, Laws, and Judgments.

While the multitude of slaves going through the wilderness after their escape from Egypt, Yahweh gave them His Ordinances through Moses His servant. They were given to teach them how to govern their lives while in the wilderness and in the promised land –Canaan.

In Exodus 21-24:18 Yahweh was reintroducing His heart to the slaves who had lost their history, heritage, identity, and knowledge of Him through their 400 years of brutal slavery. During slavery they were not taught nor allowed to reconnect with Him. Here in these chapters it would appear He is correcting all the wrongs done to them through slavery and reinstating what were already established from The Beginning of Creation.

From the giving of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 Yahweh now explains how to obey each one by reminding them how to show love and compassion to all His creations. Embedded in Yahweh's Commandments are His principles (Statute, Laws, Judgments, and Testimonies) expressed throughout the entire Torah, to learn love and compassion towards all living things, people, etc., in different situations.

For example:

- Exodus 21 – the correct treatment of slaves and animals were quite different from what they had experienced in Egypt.
- Exodus 22 – Yahweh illustrated how not to covet another; how to show compassion to criminals who caused accidental death, how to deal with damages to neighbours' property; how to restore one financially; sexual purity and accountability; and dedication of the first born child.
- Exodus 23 – Not to bear false witness against our neighbor; not to speak the names of other gods nor invoking their names; and also reintroducing His Holy Days (:14-17).
- Exodus 21-24 Yahweh reinstated and reminded them to keep all His ordinances.

All the Ten Commandments were broken down in these chapters (Exodus 21 - Deuteronomy 34) called Ordinances; also called His Mitzvah – Commandments, Laws, Testimonies, Judgments, and Statutes), to help us to be connected with Him. When we obey them whole-heartedly we live in the realm of life, as Adam and Eve lived in the realm of life when they only ate from the tree of life. The Tree of Life commands us to obey, live whole-heartedly, and maintain our connection with Yahweh through Yeshua who is the Tree of Life.

Without these Commandments, Laws, Statutes, and Judgments the multitude of slaves would not have known how extremely evil and destructive Pharaoh's decrees were, imposed on them for over 400 years; and they would have taken Pharaoh's rules to Canaan with them. Yahweh wanted to redirect them to how they should have been treated by Pharaoh, cleanse them of the past cruelties and experiences of Egypt and of the lies of satan which brought them to the realm of death and held there for so long.

He desired to correct them of these evils; reestablish them of what their previous lifestyles were in the time of their forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), who kept His Commandments, Laws, Statutes, Testimonies, and Judgments; and by obeying these commands faithfully they will be in their soul and their DNA. The evil one may not entice you to disobey all commands, but may entice you on an intellectual level to do it half-heartedly, as a result compromising and sacrificing our relationship with Yahweh and man.

Jeremiah 34:12-22 Yahweh is reminding the new generations in Canaan/Israel, the promised land of their sins. They had broken faith with Him and mankind by half-heartedly worshipping Him. They did not prosper as they should and the same covenant had established with their fore-parents years before to prosper them was now broken. For many years these people worshiped Yahweh only intellectually, form of worship without love to Him and mankind. They lived in the realm of death. They did not love Yahweh or their neighbours and as a result through their intellectual acts of worship they deliberately oppressed the people including their neighbours.

As a result judgments were pronounced upon them as was in Deuteronomy 29- 34. Now in this new generation in Israel, they would be led into captivity and the Holy City destroyed. Yahweh's heart

expressed in Jeremiah 33, and in Romans 1:11-18, the punishments (judgments) pronounced on them were His heart felt pain regarding lack of love for Him, and their cruelties toward His creations.

Jeremiah 33:2-4 “Call unto me, and I will answer thee and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not”. A person who brings his whole being into worship to God, of His Commandments, Laws, Statutes, Testimonies, and Judgments, his worship will be complete. God will answer you and tell you great things, hidden things of which you are unaware.

Our worship cannot always be understood by reason because we worship with our entire being (body, mind, and soul). In Romans 1-4, the same judgments given to the multitude of slaves were to help them and us to avoid the pitfalls of the evil one. Yahweh wants us to keep these judgments continually before our eyes, not for us to worship by intellect alone; but by embracing them in our soul and DNA. The purpose of these judgments: for us to see the continuous evil consequences of sin if we continue in them, and also to teach us how to love and have compassion to His creations. Now when we accept Yeshua’s sacrifice and embrace all His Commandments, Laws, Statutes, Testimonies, and Judgments; they become part of our soul and in our DNA. We worship Him not out of fear of punishment, but out of complete trust in Yeshua (Romans 1:17) knowing that all His judgments are right.

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Thought Pieces > **Yeshua The Greatest Artist**

Search for:

by Sis. Pauline, Jul. 4, 2014



We often wondered if we are ever good enough to come to Yeshua and give our lives to Him.

Sometimes we waver in our decisions to do so because we believe it is our own responsibility to make ourselves good enough to be accepted by Him.

“Maybe if I buy the perfect church clothes, shoes, get rid of sin in my life, rearrange my intimate life, type of work, type of activities, the way I behave, stop drinking, stop smoking, stop taking drugs, stop illicit sexual behaviours, ’; and the list can last from west to east, north to south”.

First of all you cannot wake yourself in the morning, only He can do that. So he must have a great plan for you to succeed.

As an artist myself, I often look at a canvas, art paper, art tools, and say,

“I have great plans for you. Plans to make you beautiful, decorative, I can repair if you are broken. I can change the present art work on you and replace it with the best art work ever. I can correct any flaws on you. I can clean and prime you up in preparation for MY own design for you. I have great expectations for you, to be a great master piece, and I know you will make my life beautiful by decorating my life. You will decorate the lives of others. I have a special kind of masterpiece work in mind for YOU. No one will ever say to me and you that you are ugly, or they pay the price”.

He who touches/degrades you, touches the apple of my eye. And they will pay the price.

Yeshua said the same. Jeremiah 29: 11-14

1. *“ I alone knows the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”.*

Nothing there about making yourself good to accept Him or to be accepted by Him. Your decision to accept Him is not like going on a date with the opposite sex, meeting new friends, going on a job interview where first impression counts.

FIRST IMPRESSION DOES NOT APPLY HERE.

2. *Jeremiah 29: 12 “And you will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you”.*

*Wow!! He really does have a plan for ME. He really wants to talk **with me**. I really want to know what plans. Obviously they are great plans, He said so.*

He wants us to be curious about Him. He gave us enough preliminary evidence to stir our curiosity of Him. Then we can ask Him questions, search Him out, investigate Him, and He will help develop that curiosity in us toward Him to begin to perceive Him and His presence.

You begin to realize, *“He’s not the bad guy people were saying. Why did I ever listen to them to stay away and not believe He will ever hear and answer my prayers when..... . And come to think of it, He was answering my prayers all along. I remember when....., how did I ever come out of that alive....”*

So!! The only way to know what those plans are is to read His love letters – Torah – the Bible.

3. Jeremiah 29:13 *“And you will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart”.*

Awesome!! Do you mean that all I needed to do was to be curious about Him, read His love letters to understand His character?

Yes. He wants you to read all His love letters TORAH – BIBLE and you will start to see that He is not this bad person people were saying, nor does He wants to destroy us because we made mistakes.

Think of these letters as love letters/love emails/text, etc., from someone you really love and who loves you. You will want to read those letters over and over again every day. Every time you read those letters you understand more of that person and love that person more to spend the rest of your life with. He takes great joy in your growing curiosity of Him and will be happy to lead you to more and more information of Him.

“He really wants to be with me. Sure looks like He will do anything to make that happen. Think of it, HE DID! He was so desperate for me to be with Him that He sent His only son to die for me, so I can be with Him”.

3. Jeremiah 29:14 *“I will be found by you, says the Lord. I will bring you back from your captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord. And I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away”.*

1. He will make Himself be understood by you.
2. Deliver you from whatever bad situation the enemy has you in.
3. There is a reason why you are where you are at. You have a history He wants to teach me about.
4. He wants to restore you, teach you about Him, and to reveal more intimate details to of himself.

5. Bring you right back into His Inner Courts where you will be nurtured, loved, heal, educated, grow. He will reconstruct, rebuild, re-educate, and redecorate your life in Him to be His masterpiece. Give you new DNA.
6. He wants to be the one to take care of you.
7. He will bring people into your life to help you with your situations and help you to be free to be with Him.

HE WANTS TO TRUST YOU WITH HIS HEART. TRUST HIM WITH YOURS

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- *Bonnie*

How many times have we not heard people said ‘God/Yahweh does not love me’? Here is proof that He does love us. No more despair.

- *Bonnie*

I agree with you. The enemy is a liar. It wants us to not feel God’s love, the same love it rebelled against in Heaven. Looking at how people are miserable without God, I don’t want to join them.

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